MARATHA POWER AND POLITY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY : A CASE STUDY IN ORISSA (1741- 1803)

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SUBMITTED BY

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CERIFIED that the work incorporated in the thesis 'Maratha Power and Polity in the Eighteenth Century : A Case Study in Orissa (1741-1803)' submitted by Mr. Chittaranjan Das was carried out by the candidate under my supervision / guidance. Such material that has been obtained from other sources has been acknowledged in the thesis.

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Declaration by the Candidate

I declare that the thesis entitled 'Maratha Power and Polity in the Eighteenth Century : A Case Study in Orissa (1741-1803)' submitted by me for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History is the record of work carried out by me during the period from 29. 09. 2010 to 23. 09. 2017 under the guidance of Professor (Dr.) S. M. alias Raja Dixit and has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, titles in this or any other University or other institutions of Higher learning.

I further declare that the material obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged in the thesis.

Date : 25/9/2017

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Signature of the Candidate

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Chapter I

Introduction

The emerging trends in the historiography of the eighteenth century India and of the Maratha power and polity along with some regional histories of the period in their interconnectedness suggest that the eighteenth century in Indian history could be more complex than what has been thought so far. This complexity is predicated not just upon new political actors, but the changing nature and role of the states, demography, military phenomena, ecological divide, culture and society and external actors or agencies. In the historiographies of the century, the period is variously referred to as 'late

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*The name of the state 'Orissa' as has been given in the title has been changed to 'Odisha' in the text of the thesis because of the alteration of the name by an approval of the Parliament of India on 24 March 2011. Since the approval of the title of Thesis by the University authorities preceded the alteration of the name, the title continues to carry the name 'Orissa' unchanged.

medieval', 'early colonial', 'post-Mughal formation', 'transition', 'dark age', 'economic prosperity', etc. In other words, the period of eighteenth century in India was witness to the decline of the Mughal power, rise of the regional states and a 'transition' from indigenous forms or systems to colonial system in terms of institutional changes, class formations and a subsumption of India's changing economy, trade and market, network and labour under the world capitalist system through the mechanism of colonialism. The period is also seen as the one that marked the origins of the British power[1] in a complex interplay of forces associated with a pre-modern state either on decline or decay or in a process of 'transition' into colonial induced political and economic forms and institutional arrangements. Thus, the eighteenth century in India can be seen as a period of political fluidity resulting in uncertainties of different magnitudes. The political fluidity was inextricably associated with military and economic or financial activities, all three of which, in fact, functioned in tandem. The political agencies, which were the regional actors or what has been referred to as 'post-Mughal formations,' are seen to have been variously disposed to the exigent situations they encountered.

Whereas historiographically the eighteenth century in India has been represented as 'dark age' by the imperialist writers and historians led by James Mill[2] and as also by nationalist historians, recent historiography has substantively argued in favour of prosperity or economic recuperation.

A historiographical emphasis by the nationalist historians underlined the disjunctive character and the character of continuity of the political processes in the eighteenth century. The nationalist historians have argued out the disjunctive character of colonialism that gradually took over the political process of the century and halted the indigenous processes of growth and order by way of expropriation of India's sources of raw material and other sources for the sustenance of Britain's industrial growth. Eric Stokes, C. A. Bayly, Muzaffar Alam, Frank Perlin and Andre Wink have changed the disjunctive thesis and advanced the continuity thesis arguing that the British colonialism allowed the variegated interest groups such as caste groups, networks, merchants and money lenders to flourish. It is this continuity thesis that offers great scope for re-examining the eighteenth century political fluidity and economic, military and cultural complexities in local contexts. Andre Wink[3] has examined continuity between the Mughals and the

Marathas in the eighteenth century through the use of his term *fitna*.

Four interconnected issues or broad themes of the century have been put as contexts for the purpose of the present thesis and their historiographical locations: The disintegration of the Mughals or Mughal state, the Maratha state formation and expansion of the Maratha power and polity and the regional perspective and the emergence of the colonial state or origins of the British East India Company. The four phenomena were simultaneous, interconnected and bore upon one another. Study of Maratha power and polity in the context of the eighteenth century is part of the larger process constituted by these four broad themes.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar made the first major study of the fall of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century, in his *Fall of the Mughal Empire*[4] in four volumes, based upon primary sources. Sarkar contextualized the fall of the Mughal Empire within the changing political and power equations of the Mughal with the emerging power groups in the outlying province. This led him to the study of the Marathas, as the Marathas posed a challenge to the Mughal authority as they were expanding their power and polity in the north. The first major authentic political history of the Marathas that kept aside the serious limitations of Grand Duff's[5] accounts was produced by G. S. Sardesai drawing upon the official records from the Peswa Daftar.[6] Sardesai also edited 45 volumes of *Selections from Peshwa Daftar*[7] . An extensive account of the Malwa *Suba* in terms of Maratha campaigns and its consequence of crisis in the Mughal authority and the Maratha inroads into Rajput principalities, based upon Persian and Marathi documents has been provided by Raghubir Singh.[8]

Satish Chandra[9], Irfan Habib,[10] Muzafar Alam[11] have respectively delved deep into disintegration of the Mughal empire through the analysis of the Zamindari and Jagirdari systems and the structural faults responsible for the same. The system was stressed because of paucity of Jagirs when new Jagirdars were created by the Mughal authority. This trend with regard to the Deccan was most visible. Factional politics after the Death of Aurangzeb led to the growing inability of the centre to hold the noble both at the centre and in the provinces.

Dilbagh Sing's[12] study of Eastern Rajasthan shows acute misery resulting in migration of cultivators, decline in cultivation, and decline in revenue collection. The Maratha depredation has been shown as one of the major reasons.

Rise and expansion of the Maratha polity beyond Narmada into the heartland of the north covering the erstwhile Mughal territories such as Khandesh, Malwa, Bundelkhand, Rajasthan and Agra also received attention from scholars engaged in explaining in the process of the Mughal disintegration based upon Persian, English and some regional sources as well as by scholars engaged in understanding the process and its dynamics involved in the making of the Maratha power and polity and its expansion in the eighteenth century India. Irfan Habib, Satish Chandra, V. S. Kadam,[13] Andre Wink, Stewart Gordon[14] prominently have offered, through their studies, explanations about the dynamics of the process of expansion of the Maratha polity in the eighteenth century. Wink's use of 'fitna' as an explanatory category for changing loyalty, role and conflict among the *Watandars* and other stakeholders and emergence of the Maratha confederacy under the Maratha sardars, Gordon's administrative integration of Malwa and Maratha state formation in Central India, Kadam's matrix of the 'Maratha confederacy' and the *Saranajam* system inter alia constitute the bulk of recent research attention that the themes of 'decline of the Mughals' and the 'rise and expansion of the Maratha power' has received.

What, however, emerges challenging in the face of historiographical engagements and their outcomes, is the fact that the puzzle of the eighteenth century in Indian history has yet to be addressed adequately. In this historiographical scenario, the significance of possibility of a great deal of regional works based upon regional or local sources or alternative sources has been underlined in the work.

The present work has attempted to contextualize itself within two major propositions viz. 1) The contexts of the 'post Mughal formation', the 'regional formations' and the 'successor states'; and 2) the context of regional and local studies that has underlined the significance of the new methodological exercise and exploration of untapped and unused sources at the regional or the local levels. The later has been boosted by a historiographical debate known as the eighteenth century and a few works outside the debate engaged in exploring regional polities or histories of the century based upon local sources. One such unpublished work by Chandrakant Abhang[15] in Rajasthan and some recent works on Gujarat are some of the recent examples in this direction with regards to the Marathas in the eighteenth century.

The context of the 'post-Mughal formation' has been considered in the thesis as major politico-military formation or its process in the event of the decline of the Mughal power and its central authority, a process which has been historiographically seen in terms of the rise of offshoots of the Mughals or their system. Hyderabad, Bengal and Oudh and Banaras were the offshoots of the declining Mughal system, termed as the 'successor states' and Mysore under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, the Marathas, Sikhs and the Jats were autonomous and indigenous formations. The post Mughal states contested and challenged the central Mughal authority in their regional spheres and competed among themselves through different types of alliances, diplomacy and wars. The Marathas alone emerged as a pan India formation. Their polity existed in different locales.

The existence of the Maratha polity in different locales at the pan-India level warrants a different configuration or methodological engagement which prioritize the local sources in place of the dominantly Marathi or *modi* documents with a Maratha centric vision comparable with the Mughal centric vision based upon dominant use of the Persian sources as far as the history of the Mughals is concerned.

In the context of the continuity and changes of different magnitudes as has been proposed and indicated by different historiographical engagements, it is a methodological imperative to examine the Maratha activities in different regions in order to explore possibility of relocating the Maratha power and polity in the light of various historiographcial claims.

The historiographical context of each region where the Maratha polity existed has been considered necessary in view of the images of the Marathas produced historiographically in such specific regions. In the historical writings of Odisha, the Maratha presence is very little written about. The Marathas often have been seen as 'chaotic' and disruptive, images which have been built thanks to the Imperialist historical writings by such writers as Andrew Sterling, Sir William Wilson Hunter, George Toynbee, John Beams, which seem to have influenced major historiographical traditions in Odisha.[16] Writes Stirling, "The administration of the Marathas, as in every other part of their foreign conquests, was fatal to the welfare of the people and the prosperity of the country, and exhibits a picture of misrule, anarchy, weakness, rapacity and violence combined, which makes one wonder how society can have been kept together under so calamitous a tyranny."[17] The writings that have influenced the historiography of the regions concerning particularly with the Marathas are the colonial writings or the writings by colonial administrators, commissioners and historians about the pre-colonial Odisha immediately after they took over.

Field visits, collection and examination of various local documents, discussion with cross section of people in different localities in Odisha, literary works, do suggest that the Maratha activities in Odisha cannot be constituted in a unified way into a unified narrative. For example if Marathas have been seen as *'bargis'* in a large region from Cuttack to Balasore and Midnapur, in South Odisha, particularly in Puri, they were seen as 'liberators' and have been celebrated and praised. It has also been suggested that during the Maratha rule Odia literature flourished and many elements of cultural prosperity are also visible which may be postulated here as definite indicator of the positive or the benign side of the Maratha rule in Odisha. The period also did not see any agrarian discontent in the form of resistance or rebellions which were seen during the preceding period under the Muslim rule and on a large scale in the succeeding regime under the British. It is this local context of the Maratha power and polity of the eighteenth century that makes the present research relevant.

Further, postulates that follow from the 'dark age' thesis that the Imperial systems are the best recognizable systems and that between the Mughal and the British Imperial systems there was no order or system in place, does not seem to be tenable any longer in view of the amount of attention that the eighteenth century Maratha polity has attracted from scholarship in India and abroad. In fact Marathas can be seen to be an interposing proto-Imperial formation between the Mughals and the British empires.

The thesis has thus two foci which are intertwined or interconstitutive: First, it makes an attempt to examine the Maratha power and polity in the context of the eighteenth century complexity; and second it examines the Maratha polity in a local context using a variety of local material, archival and non-archival and cultural sources, in order to locate the Maratha polity in a regional or local context and make an assessment of its disposition as a pre-modern state or system or a continuity of medieval Indian system within a framework of late medieval political economy or politico-military structure. The material or data drawn from Odisha as a regional setting help us contribute to the ongoing debate in which we examine a major indigenous political agency, the Marathas.

The Maratha rule in Odisha has not received much research attention. In most of the linear historical writings the Maratha rule which extended from 1751-1803 does not have make any visibility. Except for some works by B C Ray[18] and some stray works in the forms of articles in some journals such as *Orissa History Research Journal*, there is very little that one would really come across as far as the Maratha polity in Odisha is concerned.

Methodology:

The thesis has configured the Maratha polity of the eighteenth century at two levels- The Pan India level and the local level, i.e., Odisha. For the first level, it has provided the contexts of the Maratha power and polity in the eighteenth century on the basis of the examinations of various historiographies and their sources. The decline of the Mughals, the emergence of regional states, 'rise of the arid zone', horse[19] and the relation between the arid and semi-arid zone such as Deccan and the wet/humid zone with consequential interaction including conflict across the frontiers[20] (internal and external), ‘military labour market’[21], ‘control over the South Asian military economy, demographic and military composition have been examined and used for providing necessary configuration for the Maratha power and polity. The Marathas responded to and acted within the circumstances of these kinds, they are contextualized within these frames.

The second level in the configuration is that of the local i.e., Odisha. Based upon the local sources and field visits, the Maratha polity is examined in terms of a variety of roles the polity seems to have discharged in various locales or sub-regions in Odisha.

Research for the thesis has combined fieldwork, archival sources, literary and cultural works, archeological works, and library works, travelers’ accounts, Persian sources translated into English, Marathi and *modi* sources apart from a large number of secondary sources in the form of books and articles etc. Fieldworks and visit include, visit to Balasore, Puri, Khurda, Kanika, Dhenkanal, Daspalla, Ranpur, Puri, Sambalpur and Cuttack. Archival sources have been collected chiefly from Odisha State Archives, Bhubaneswar, Jagannath Ballav Archives and Library, Puri, Peshwa Daftar Pune and Bharat Itihas Samsodhak

Mandal, Pune. Historical methods have been used for source criticism. Comparative historical methods have also been used for locating the subject in terms of the other actors or agency in the contemporary spatio-temporal context and responses to the situations.

A variety of conceptual tools drawn from economic history, ecology, military history have been used in the work.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is introduction which includes statement of justification or relevance of the research work, objective, literature review and methodology.

The second chapter entitled 'The Maratha power and Polity in the Eighteenth Century,' examines the nature of expansion of the Maratha polity and its power bases such as the military, the confederacy, economy, in the face of the several forces and complex sociopolitical economic and military phenomena that the eighteenth century in India witnessed. Expansion of the Maratha polity beyond the *Swarajya* into a pan India polity with its internal dynamics is the thrust of the chapter. It also examines how Chauth was an instrument of Maratha inroads and expansion, a legitimizing instrument used by the Marathas in the eighteenth century.

The third chapter entitled 'Maratha inroads into the east and Invasions in Orissa, 1741- 51,' discusses and examines the reason of the Maratha expansion or inroads into East, particularly, Odisha. The chapter examines battles, invasions and nature of battles, doctrine of warfare and occupations and their effects on the ground.

The fourth chapter entitled, 'Maratha Rule in Odisha, Politics, Administration and Economy, 1751-1803,' looks into the nature of the Maratha polity after Raghuji Bhonsle took possession of Odisha in 1751 from the Nawab of Bengal, Alivardi Khan. With the subha of Odisha politically and administratively separated from Bengal and with the river Subarnarekha marking the boundary between the two, Bengal was required to pay Chauth to the Bhonsle kings of Nagpur as per the treaty signed between the Nawab of Bengal and Rahguji Bhonsle in 1751. The Maratha rule in Orissa with regard to the *Mughalbandi* and *Garhjat* has been discussed in the chapter and its political economy.

The Fifth chapter entitled 'Maratha Role in the cultural domain of Odisha,' examines a very little known, but significant aspect of the Maratha polity in Odisha. An important aspect of the Maratha rule in Odisha during the period is their role in the cultural domain in Orissa which include in a substantive way promotion of pilgrim infrastructure, management of Jagannath temple, institution of activities in the temple, promotion of *Mathas* (monasteries) around puri and some in Cuttack also, land grants, patronization, negotiation of ritual power and conferment of ritual status on Odishan chiefs etc. The Period of the Marathas saw rise of literary activities in Odia which can be partly attributed to the Maratha role as well as a conducive socioeconomic atmosphere supportive or conducive of such cultural and creative activities. This role has left an indelible positive image of the Marathas in the region producing an image of 'liberator' against the background of the Muslim and Afghan attacks in the religious sphere, Puri, particularly when Lord Jagannath had emerged as the regional deity of Odisha and Puri as *Srikshetra.* This also had an economic dimension i.e., pilgrim tax.

The sixth chapter is 'conclusion'. This chapter reflects upon the implications that follow from the empirically and analytically grounded discussions or constructions under the various chapters and critically evaluates the Maratha polity in Odisha in the local context while trying also to connect it to the larger processes of the Maratha polity and the eighteenth century context of kind of polity and political agency the Marathas were disposed to. [22]

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[17] Andrew Stirling, *op.cit.,* p. 117.

[18] B. C. Ray, *Orissa Under the Marathas, 1751- 1803*, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1960.

[19] Jos Gommans, 'Warhorse and Post-nomadic empire in Asia, C. 1100- 1800,' *Journal of Global History,* (2007), 2, PP.1- 21. Gommans offers very interesting argument about the emergence of empires in India built on the frontiers. The arguments can be stretched to locate the emergence of the new states with horse power in the seventeenth and eighteenth century India.

[20] Jos Gommans, 'Silent Frontier of South Asia, C. A.D. 1100- 1800,' Gommans uses the term frontier to geographically delineate the existence of two zones in India in its political, economic, military and cultural differences and interconnectedness. The eighteenth century is seen as a process of a specific relation between these two zones with their attendant military, transport, animal etc power and their power and their political and military power compositions.

[21] The term 'military labour market' has been used by Dirk H. A. Kolff and Randolf G. S. Cooper. Dirk H. A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of Military Labour Market in Hindusthan* 1450- 1850, Cambridge, 1990. Randolf G. S. Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and Contest for India:The Struggle for Control of the South Asian Military Economy*, Cambridge, 2004.

Chapter II

Maratha Power and Polity in the Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth century in India offers a very complex and dynamic situation at an intersection of two major political processes. The first is the Mughal centric political process that emanated from the fact that the Mughals dominated the political scene for more than two centuries by establishing a system of polity (administrative, legal and financial institutions), creating an imperial order and evolving political and cultural legitimacy as represented through political practices, symbolic order, idioms, employment, taxation and dominion, acceptance of subordination by political entities etc. The Mughal legitimacy or hegemony[1] was both political and cultural. This assumes that the Mughals evolved a culture that was internalized by the Indians and remained ingrained or embedded in the political structure having thus produced politically significant symbolic value and order. Hence, in more ways than one the eighteenth century has been treated Mughal centric at the pan-Indian level. A few illustrations might make the point clear enough. The political culture of India often "expressed itself through the idea that the emperor of Delhi was the lord of the Universe."[2] Bernard Cohn has argued how the Mughal hegemony or legitimacy continued through political practices, ritual codes, idioms and symbols etc. right into the nineteenth century adopted often by the British even after they were already entrenched as political masters in India.[3] This illustrates the magnitude of the Mughal hegemony in the subcontinent in the period immediately preceding the British rule. Mughal state thus was seen as legitimating even in the century when the empire was in the process of disintegration and its power on the decline.

The Marathas too encountered a situation of similar magnitude in the eighteenth century as they moved spatially into territories in the north beyond the river Narmada. The Maratha-Mughal relations in the eighteenth century present a paradigm in which there is a contestation between the Marathas and the Mughals, with the Maratha assertion within an overall structure of Mughal sovereignty while inserting into the Mughal system and structure and seeking often political legitimation from the Mughals.

The Mughal-Maratha relation is one of the core areas of the eighteenth century dynamics and therefore, a narrative thereof. The role of the Marathas in this scenario has not been given the due importance though Marathas played a significant instrumental role in the century within the space of political gap visible between the Mughals and the establishment of the British rule in the subcontinent. The Mughal centrism in the dominant medieval historiographical operation has assumed that the role of the Marathas was that of a regional state, thus confining the role of the Marathas to the Deccan in a major way and secondly, the Imperialist and colonial historiographical and discursive practices have often created an image of 'marauder' and 'chaotic' responsible for the crisis and the 'moral decline' of the century.

Hence, a deconstructive approach to why has the historiography been so placed has been necessary in the face of the emergence of regional historiographical approaches which engendered great interest in the history of the Marathas in the eighteenth century India, based upon the Marathi sources dominated by the archival sources located in the *Peshwa Daftar* and other regional archives in regions where the Marathas ruled such as in Bikaner and Sitamahu (Sir Raghubir Library) etc. on the one hand and the regional local sources of that are available in local languages including the material or sources that are procured from the fields in regions and locales where the Maratha rule existed or the memory of the Maratha rule, military action etc. exist or are embedded in some forms. Though this task is methodologically challenging, it has led to an emerging trend of a new way of looking at the Maratha history from the point of view of the regional sources which may provide a fresh or new dimension to the study of the Maratha history, isolating it from Mughal centric and Maratha centric historiographies.

The role of the Marathas in the eighteenth century has several contexts, which, if examined properly would give us a different understanding of the rise and expansion of the Maratha polity in the century contextually. Though, as has been claimed here, the Maratha polity must be understood first within the context of the Mughal-Maratha relation that continued to be a major and core part of the century, the other forces which facilitated the rise and expansion of the Maratha polity need due consideration. The Mughal-Maratha relations and its dynamics in the century is a relation of decline of one, i.e., the Mughals and the rise of the Marathas. The role of the Marathas, constitutive of the historical process of the century, may be seen in terms of assertion, insertion and legitimation. The Maratha process of ascertain can be seen to have commenced from the establishment of Maratha kingdom in the Deccan by Shivaji and later under

Rajaram and Shahu or the Peshwas when the polity defined its objective beyond the Narmada to the north through Malwa. The process of insertion was the process that was coexistent with the disintegration of the Mughal empire in the process and event of which the Marathas inserted themselves into the outlying and other territories where the Mughals had become weak almost appearing to be the heirs to the Mughals in the political and economic sense of the term, using military power and raids to make their claims for *Chauth*. Assertion and insertion were often sought to be addressed through legitimation from the Mughal technical authority and its symbolic representation of authority. Whereas this is one dimension of the study of the Maratha power and polity of century, other forces need to be grounded here in due course of the narrative.

As has been claimed here, even after the Mughal decline, the idea of their dominion persisted. In a substantive sense, if Mughals defined Indian Pre-colonial (or late pre-colonial) and pre-modern period in the subcontinent, Marathas were a major participant and instrumental in this process. The eighteenth century, therefore, can be presented as a period of Mughal-Maratha relations. "The Marathas had emerged before the English as the appropriators of the Mughal realm. They readily accepted the Mughal ideals despite the sedition (*fitna*) upon which they were seen to have built their power. They were duly endowed with a quarter (*chauth*) of the revenue of the Mughal Empire throughout the country in 1752."[4]

The process of decline and disintegration of the Mughal Empire and decline of their power followed the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 and fastened by his weak successors, from Muazzam (Shah Alam) in 1707 to Muhammad Shah from 1719-1748. The decline was most distinctly visible in challenges to the Mughal authority at the provincial levels. The process of the weakening of the Mughal central authority synchronized with the process of what has been called the 'post-Mughal formations', divided into the 'successor states' and the other 'regional states'. Hyderabad, Bengal, Oudh and Banaras were among the major 'successor states' which were erstwhile Mughal peripheries (provinces) under the Mughal governors and inherited the Mughal system and culture. They represented continuation of the Mughal system with the difference of the provincial authority being now independent or autonomous. Mysore (Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan), the Marathas, the Jats, the Sikhs, the Rohilas represented states, systems or groups outside the Mughal system who showed resistance to the Mughal state and tried to carve out independent niches for themselves. They may be seen as indigenous local formations. Thus, the death of Aurangzeb was followed by series of resistance to Mughal suzerainty vociferously ascertaining their independence or autonomy in various regions. This process had two sides : it showed assertion of its local autonomy at one level and at another level the regional states recognized the Mughal symbolic authority amounting to acceptance of their technical sovereignty and hegemony at the trans-regional and pan-India level. The Marathas for example used the Mughal hegemony or pan-India authority for legitimizing their role in the process of demand and collection of *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi*, from minor states or regions on the basis of Mughal grants, non acceptance of or non-submission to which led to raids by the Maratha bands or launching of military attacks by the Maratha cavalry. In other words, the Mughal sovereignty and hegemony continued to remain through the century while regional states pursued their political, financial and military activities independently by way of assertion.

Thus the politico-military-economic scenario of the century presented a picture of competition among a number of political stakeholders, seen as regional 'formations'. Every regional state tried to increase its economic resources, strengthened its polity and to expand its military, through recruitments and by bringing changes in the strategic and tactical domains and as also by bringing about partial modernization as attempted by Mysore state under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan and the Marathas particularly under Shindia and the Sikhs resulting sometimes in creation of hybrid military organizations.[5] Wars, battles, diplomacy, treaty, attacks or raids, battles of attritions, destruction villages, animals and productive resources of the enemy or destruction of logistics etc. were of regular occurrence. Some of these actually are seen as the signs of the moral decline or conscience of the century in the subcontinent represented in the contemporary literature and folklore. In fact, a large part of this phenomenon has been associated with the Marathas, since the Marathas fought the largest number of wars or battle in the century at the sub-continental level and their strategic regime in the eighteenth century underwent considerable change and tactical doctrine also changed to a large extent thanks to the theatres of war in the north far away from home and their original 'military labour market' and the nature of battles or raids they were conduct and the financial resources that supported these activities in additions to their nurture political and financial objective clearly enshrined in the Maratha confederacy.

The disintegration of the Mughal Empire and decline of the Mughal power had an immediate effect on the Mughal structure of employment. The Mughals with their vast armed forces and with expanded civil administration had big bureaucratic administrative apparatus which implied that the

Mughals were large employers. This is particularly pertinent with regard to the size of employment in the Mughal armed forces. It has been argued recently by military historians that the medieval period in India saw the rise of 'peasant soldier'. This phenomenon has been represented by the fact that every peasant in the period wielded some form of weapon including a stick, a sociology that amounts to seeing every individual as a potential fighter or soldier. The Mughals located in the humid and wet agrarian fertile Gangetic basin, with their vast resources absorbed these elements and had an advantage all other state forms or systems. With disintegration of the Mughal empire and had a bearing on this as these elements who constituted huge military force could be used by other forces who now tried create sources and strengthened their state and military establishment. They were now available for provincial armed forces at a time of politico military competition and fight over economic resources. The Marathas had the advantage of absorbing a large part of these soldiers and armed men in the Deccan during their struggle against the Mughals and in the north as they expanded.[6] Kolff formulated that there existed in the subcontinent an 'immense military labour market' in the eighteenth century. "Since every male peasant cultivator was skilled in the use of weapons, including bows and muskets, this meant there existed a vast pool of potential soldiers and warriors from whom various chiefs, rebels, bandit chiefs, military contractors, rajas, sultans and emperors could freely recruit their armies. Most of these peasant soldiers, lacking horses served as infantry and musketeers."[7] Even though most of what Kolff talks were the armed peasants in the north, the similar argument or minimally postulate, awaiting substantial research in this direction, can be made about the Deccan about the same time, as observed by Richards. "Peasants-soldiers, arms and militant societies flourished in the Deccan and South India as well. The Mughal state faced even greater problems from armed resistance and tough-skinned local society in the south than in the north. The lives and treasure expended in the quarter-century-long Maratha wars amply testify to this point." [8] What, however, is very significant in the context of the present work is a scenario of the eighteenth century in which Marathas are seen gaining advantage in the domain which the Mughals possessed, which helped the Marathas in their rise and expansion and worked against the Mughals for nor being able to absorb or retain the forces any longer.

The disintegration of the Mughal Empire also had its impact on the economy, military and the society or the sociology as on the changing demographic profile through the century. The Indo-Afghan geographical continuum led to demographic changes with India being exposed to Afghan exodus. The entry of Afghan and other the central Asian and middle eastern elements through Afghanistan for commercial and military activities or offering military services to the states competing among themselves for more economic and political activities while resisting the Mughal authority or interventions, was responsible in a large way in changing the very character of political economy, demography of the century in the northern part of the sub-continent. Bayly looks at a phenomenon, he call 'tribal breakout' of unruly Afghan, Persian Turkmen and Arab elements between 1720 and 1760.[9] This, he argues, affected the entire Islamic world including the Mughal India in the Gangetic north. This phenomenon pushed a large number of tribal cavalry men into the Islamic empires, the Ottoman, Safavids and the Mughals. The Afghan tribes located in Roh, their mountain stronghold gradually spread into India had good access to war-horses and cavalry, the primary instruments of war of the period.[10] The mobility of the Afghan free-booters and horse-traders often undermined the state structure of the Mughals.[11]

The historiographical constructions of the eighteenth century India in terms of 'crisis', 'dark age', 'moral decline', as a 'period of instability', 'predation' etc. which emanated from the Colonial master narratives as has been suggested in the earlier chapter as well as the other colonial reports and administrative writing and reports of the surveyors, have often been associated with the political agency of the century. The most active and ubiquitous political agency in the century is the Maratha state or more appropriately the Martha confederacy. In the colonial discourses, colonial reports and other administrative writings in Odisha in the early nineteenth century after the British takeover from the Marathas in 1803, the Marathas constantly have been referred to as 'predatory Marathas', responsible for the economic crisis and poverty of the region. In some of the other local writings in Odia, one of them being an eyewitness account, of a battle in Dhenkanal in 1781 fought between the Dhenkanal Raja and the Marathas written in the form of historical poem, the Marathas are referred to or depicted as '*bargis*' by Brajanath Badjena.[12] Writing in the nineteenth century in the first Odia historical novel, *Lachhma* which was later staged in Odia theatre, Fakir Mohan Senapati also uses the word '*bargi*' for the Marathas and another Bengali eyewitness account written in *Puranic* style concerned with Maratha battles, invasions, raids and their concomitant devastation in Bengal, particularly over an area to the east of the river Ganga, from 1742-1744, by Gangaram, also makes the same references to the Marathas after his initial expectations about the Maratha justice and possible liberation from the Nawab's misrule, were dashed due to the fury of Maratha invasions.[13] In this writing an element of a preconceived notion about the inherent goodness and justice in the Maratha polity since the time Chhatrapti Shivaji to the present Shahu is depicted in both the eyewitness accounts in Odia and Bengali, that the Marathas are the deliverer from misrule and would bring justice, but the Maratha battles and devastations caused by them change these images about the Bhonsles and to some extent about the contemporary Maratha polity. Whereas these historiographical and discursive issues will have to be addressed separately through research in regional contexts and using non-conventional sources as well as by deconstructive strategy and nuanced reading of culturally produced text of the period and their mediations, we need to look at the how historiography played a role in characterizing the eighteenth century here Marathas are a pan Indian agency.

Stuart Gordon has engaged this aspect significantly through centrally deployed interrogative terminological use of 'thugi' in his *Marathas, Marauders and State Formation in Eighteenth-Century India.*[14] The central deployment of the term smacks of the moral, social and administrative contours, thus making it a very powerful investigative modality for the purpose of understanding the Indian society and polity of the time. Gordon investigates the use of the term and its related historiographical implications in the larger framework of the century on the one hand and how it

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bore upon the Marathas on the other. It would be pertinent to bring that discourse here.

"The dislocation of society drove adventurers, hopeless or embittered spirits to a lawless life. They formed the material for princely armies or robber band, each of whom recruited from the other as fortunes rose and fell. The landless and uprooted man looked for a leader and reckless from despair was the typical figure of the time. A specialized form of these men was 'thugs', rubbers and ritual 'marauders', who rose to prominence in these times and spread across central India to the terror of travelers and peaceful men."[15] Thus a revisit of the discursive aspects of the century is necessary by way of used local data and methodological innovation.

Recent historiography concerning military and ecological history has visited the eighteenth century through the 'rise of the arid zone' which is closely and analytically associated with (war) horse and cavalry. The eighteenth century in India is witness to a great deal of activities of political, military and economic nature and many of these activities can be seen to have accelerated its space in the interstices between the arid and semiarid nomadic pastoral societies on the one hand and the wet, humid settled agrarian societies on the other - the interstices that constituted the 'frontier' of the Mughals state. In this emerging historiography, where a great deal of research is required to make conclusive statements, a critical examination of the relation between the ecology and state formation has been done. The correlation between the agrarian production, animal for agriculture, transport and war, demographic movement or mobility has been established. Within this ecological framework, this historiography has tried to locate the relation between the arid nomadic pastoralism and the wet, humid sedentary agrarian societies. Using the concept of frontier in a modified way, to explain the relation between the eco-systems of socio-political formations in both, it examines the historical relations between the two in the context of Eurasia, the logic of which has been applied to South Asia. "For Eurasia, the frontier that has molded its history consisted of a broad overlapping area in which two different ways of life encountered each other, the one predominantly pastoral-nomadic, the other mainly sedentary-agrarian."[16] Such an encounter or an enduring relation also existed in south Asia as represented in early Indian texts such as Vedic texts, *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat* and many other classical texts in terms of relations between *grama* (the settled agricultural community) and *aranya* (the alien outside the sphere of the jungle and its mobile people), the two realms complementing each other in several ways.[17] The medieval period in South Asia needs to be seen within this frontier framework close interaction between the pastoral nomadic life and sedentary society until the nineteenth century as suggested by this historiography.

"From the start of the second millennium South Asia became more closely linked to that much wider, frequently broken, ecological continuum sometimes called *Saharasia,* which included all the drier zones of Eurasia, stretching from the Atlantic coast of northern Africa to the eastern and southern extremes of the Indian subcontinent."[18] South Asia serves more as a transitional zone between the Arid zone of extreme pastoral nomadism and the more humid area of Monsoon Asia with its intensive settled agriculture. "From about the twelfth century onwards- a time when all the drier area of Eurasia began to converge as a result of nomadic expansion- the Arid zone, in South Asia emerged as a vibrant frontier region that widened the horizon of and opened new channels for highly mobile pastoralists, warriors, merchants, pilgrims and others." [19]

In South Asia the arid zone with its natural deserts and savannas intersected with well-watered river valleys which allowed a symbiosis of two economies. After the twelfth century, the Arid zone became a major conductor of people, animals, goods and ideas. Extensive military, commercial and religious networks across the Arid zone began to reach a high level not known earlier. [20] With trade, military recruitments, animal locomotive power and resources such as the oxen, horses, dromedaries, sheep, goats, nutritious fodder availability for such animals, horse breeding (along the Bhima in Maharashtra, in Kathiawar in Gujarat, and in Lekhi jungle in Punjab), the arid zone in South Asia reached its maturity between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries. What has been called the 'horse warrior revolution' and the 'rise of the arid zone' witnessed emergence of warrior groups such as the Rajputs, Marathas and the Nayaks in the Arid zones in South Asia. The spread of the war-horses, dromedaries, and oxen is argued to have contributed to the South Asia's potential for warfare, transportation and cultivation.[21] What may summarily be stated in view of the ecological and military historiography in the context of the present work is that the rise of the Maratha power in the eighteenth century was product of the process of developments in the arid zone and the nature of symbiosis between the two zones in the context of the south Asian history during the period. The rise of the Marathas in the Deccan arid zone and its extension of power and polity beyond the Deccan, particularly to the north of river Narmada needs be seen from this perspective and that of the frontier in South Asia's historical context. The reason why and how the Marathas could be seen to have developed a 'proto-imperial' polity in the eighteenth century can be seen partly through this perspective.

Viewed within the context of the historical forces that shaped the trajectory of certain historical processes located at a certain spatio-temporal intersection, i.e., the Deccan (the Maratha Deccan) in the eighteenth century, the history of the Maratha polity in the century requires to be narrated in terms of the methodology it creates for its expansion. Such a discussion veers round the forces that governed and facilitated the rise, the urge or a compulsion for expansion and the availability of instruments such as war and transport animals, trade route and demand for economic resources etc. The actual process through which it really worked is the political process and dynamic choices made from time to time by an individual or collective leadership.

The Maratha polity in the eighteenth century transformed from a kingdom located in the Deccan referred to as *swarajya* into a "far-flung empire under Shahu, knocking at the gates of Delhi, planting the Maratha flag at Attock, making a deep thrust into Bengal, overrunning South India as far as Arcot and Trichonopoli *making Chanda Saheb a prisoner."*[22] The Maratha Confederacy was the fulcrum of this expansion. The Maratha confederacy came into existence as a response to a politically expedient situation when the Maratha kingdom faced the threat of extinction following the death of Chhatrapati Shivaji and torture and murder of Sambhaji by the Mughal forces. Shivaji's

Asthapradhan Mandal, with six being military commanders (except Panditrao and Nyayadhish) of the eight ministers, perhaps contained the seeds of the Confederacy as argued by Chitnis.[23] But it was during the Period of crisis after the murder of Sambhaji by the Mughals and the Maratha war of independence that the Maratha Confederacy was born and took shape. Devised by Rajaram in consultation with several chiefs it took the form of *saranjam* and granting to the chiefs (saardars) *sanads* for the collection of *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi* from the Mughal provinces. Sardars were appointed to collect *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi* from various provinces or Mughal territories as for example Parsoji Bhosle of Gondhwana and Berar, the Nimbalkars from Gangthadi, the Dhabades from Gujarat and Khandesh etc. Services of the *sardars* were rewarded by way of granting *inams* and *jagirs* by Rajaram.

It was Balaji Vishwanath, the first Peshwa under Chhatrapati Shau who strengthened the Confederacy. Balaji Vishanath got three *sanads* from the Mughal government in 1719, namely *Swarajya*, *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi* that gave it legitimacy.

In the course of the century, the Peshwa established his authority over the *Swarjaya* (Maharashtra) from his seat power in Pune was technically the head of the Confederacy. The *sardars*, however, carved out principalities and extended their spheres of influence and interest in the outlying Mughal provinces. The Bhonsales established themselves in Nagpur extended into Odisha and Bengal, the Shindhias in Gowalier, the Gwaikwads in Baroda, the Holkars in Indore and the Ghorpode and Pradhan in the South. "Between the Peshwas and the Maratha Chiefs there subsisted a relationship which it is most difficult to define. The chiefs were to all intent and purposes independent, yet, they recognized the Peshwa as head of the Maratha polity."[24] The Maratha power and polity under the Maratha Confederacy was strengthened under the Peshwa Baji Rao I and reached its zenith under the leadership of Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao (1740 -1761). The political fortunes of the Marathas faced the first major debacle at the battle of Panipat in 1761. Though they recovered from the defeat especially under the leadership of Peshwa Madhav Rao I, the fortunes were sealed and the political edifice built by the Marathas and the Maratha confederacy were shattered by the English East India Company through three Anglo Maratha wars (1780-82, 1803-05 and 1817-1818).

Balaji Vishawnath laid the foundation of the new Maratha power on the basis of strengthening the Maratha confederacy as well as getting three *sanads* from the Mughal emperor which legalized the Maratha claim of *Chauth* from the six Mughal *subhahs* in the Deccan. But the Peshwa extended the claim of sovereignty over Malwa, Gujarat and Hindusthan which was subsequently approved by the Chhatrapti. This commenced the exertion of Maratha sovereignty in the north. During the Peshwaship of the Balaji Viswanath, Baji Rao I and Balaji Baji Rao alias Nana Sahib, the Maratha power spread far and wide. The conquest of Malwa and Bundelkhand was completed under Balaji Baji Rao. During the period the Marathas penetrated into the Punjab, Attock, Doab, Awadh (Oudh), Allahabad, Bihar, Bengal and Odisha. "All these conquests of the Marathas without exceptions started as 'conquests on invitation', as *fitna* : their assistance was sought by one party in a succession dispute among local chiefs or *Zamindars*, or they were called into back an appropriation of rights." [25]

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In the South, the Maratha *Swarajya* was much more fragile and limited than in the north. The Marathas extended their conquests as far as Tungabhadra but remained in perpetual contest with Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan of Mysore.[26]

The rise of the Maratha power and expansion of their polity in the eighteenth century has been seen historiographically within the context of the 'Post Mughal formations' and have been grouped among 'regional states' as distinguished from the other group called the 'successor states'.

The Maratha power became in pan-Indian power in the eighteenth century. This magnitude of the Maratha polity has been referred to as 'Maratha Empire'. But many scholars prefer to refer to it as Maratha polity or confederacy. The Basic characteristic of the Maratha polity or the confederacy of the century was that it originated in the *saranajam*[27] system under Rajaram. This process transformed the Maratha power and polity from a regional power located in the (Western) Deccan (plateau), into a pan-India power and polit[28] in the eighteenth century. The 'Maratha Confederacy' was born as a response to a politically and militarily expedient situation in the aftermath of the killing of Sambhaji and beginning of 'Maratha war of independence' under the leadership of Rajaram and Tarabai. It was a process of consolidation of Maratha power and extension of the Maratha *Swarajya* on the basis of legitimacy as derived from the Mughal Emperor over the Muhgal Subhahs, with continued claims and assertion of the such claims over the entire subcontinent. The Marathas played very important role in the Delhi politics. In 1752, the Marathas became the protector of the Mughal throne by a treaty which they used to legitimately demand and collect *Chauth* from Punjab and other territories. In fact, *Chauth* was used as a legitimate instrument of conquest by the Marathas through the century.

The Marathas created two approaches vis-à-vis conquered territories: one was the integration such as Malwa which was gradually integrated into the Polity. Malwa and Bundelkhand were points from where the Marathas made their invasions into the north, thus making it a very important strategic geopolitical region; the second was 'extraction' through raids from territories which the Marathas never integrated, the Maratha presence here was in the form of military outposts.

The Marathas polity had four frontiers in the eighteenth century. Bengal and Odisha constituted the Maratha frontier in the East, Karantak was the frontier in the South, Khandesh, and Malwa to the north of Maharashtra, Rajasthan in the north and west.

The political and military situation in the eighteenth century saw a phenomenon of war as continuous part of societal life. It has been argued that … "if an army was not sent for one year, there would not be nay collection of tribute any? for that year entailing thereby losses."[29] The Maratha income in the eighteenth century comprised *Chauth*, tributes, booty, ransom and toll and pilgrim taxes. When the Maratha power extended into vast areas in *Hindusthan*, the Maratha military recruitments increased requirements of payment. There was also increase in the mercenary forces. In the documents in the Peshwa Daftar, one can glean military payments running into arrears. This situation often led to practice of farming of *Chauth*. Documents also show huge amounts of loans, running into several lakhs of rupees raised at very high rate of interest by Maratha chieftains for paying wages of their soldiers.[30] Bankers and traders often accompanied chiefs of marching army. The chiefs and the creditors had relation of interdependence. It was phenomenon of military economy. As has been suggested by some economic historians raid was a part of the economic activity during the period particularly practiced by the Marathas, sometimes referred to as 'raid economy'.

There were considerable changes in the Maratha strategy and tactics in the eighteenth century, particularly from 1740s as they expanded their frontiers. The Maratha troops had to be stationed at camps in Malwa and Gujarat not allowed to return home for farm, regularly paid and the size which led to enormous demand of cash. Fulltime mercenaries joined the Maratha army and were quartered at camps.

As the Martha transited into the north, they had to fight pitched battles. The cavalry raids and pitched battles were practiced simultaneously. The Marathas tactically cut off supplies of the enemy thereby destroying the logistics. Raghuji Bhonsle used the tactics of cutting of supplies, communication and foraging of the enemy in Bengal, Bihar and Odisha in 1740s.[31] They also used siege warfare as they did in Odisha against the *Garhjat* chief of Dhenkanal in 1781. The Marathas used light cavalry for raids which travelled 50 miles a night.

The Marathas had ignored artillery for a long time. The Marathas now incorporated artillery and hired European, first Portuguese and later French and English whose expertise in canon making and used were of geat support for the war machinery particularly in their assault on Jat fortresses and in Rajasthan. But the artillery they used was still in their primitive make. The Marathas were therefore dependent on light cavalry.

Infantry which assumed importance in the 1740-60 was shaped by a system of weapons such as the Muskets and matchlocks and professionalization and different military organization and military doctrine clearly demonstrated by the British in 1757 in the battle of Plessey. Marathas did incorporate such a unit under Mahadji Scindia at the end of the eighteenth century. The Marathas, therefore, fought 'asymmetrical warfare' with the English.

The entry of the English from the periphery towards the centre of Indian political scene is a dimension of the Maratha power and polity of the century. The English East India Company made its presence and conducted its activities in the coastal regions in the beginning but gradually evinced interest in Indian territorial conquest after the battle of Plassey. The Anglo-Maratha contest for the 'control over South Asia's military economy' as argued by Cooper was core factor in the battle.[32] The East India Company evolved what has been called the 'military fiscalism' and the Marathas failed resulting in the emergence of the Company as victorious in the process.

The post Battle of Panipat (1761) scenario also marked the emergence of centrifugal forces in the Maratha Confederacy. Bhonsles of Nagpur, Patwardhan in the South, opposed the Peshwa and joined hands against him. In the later part of the century factional politics weakened the strength of the Confederacy. The Confederacy had no inherent strength to endure under the emerging circumstances by the turn of the century.

Notes and References

[1] The term *'hegemony'* has been used here in the Gramcian sense of the term to denote an organic link between the ruler representing a system which is manifest in consents by the ruled as represented in various ways political and cultural, more often through symbolic order, signs and idioms.

[2] P. J. Marshal (ed.), *The Oxford History of British empire*: *The Eighteenth Century*, Vol. II, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 510.

[3] Bernard Cohn, 'Representing authority in Victorian India', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (eds.), *Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 165- 210.

[4] Ibid., p. 510.

[5] See Kaushi Roy, 'Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare and Indian Society, c.1740- 1849', *The Journal of Military History*, 69, July 2005, pp. 651- 690.

[6] See Dirk *H. A. Kolff, Naukar, rajput and Sepoy, The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindusthan, 1450- 1850.*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990. Jos J.L Gommans and Dirk, H. A. Kolff (eds.), *Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia, 1000- 1800*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001. John F. Richards, 'Warriors and the State in Early Modern India', *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 47, No. 3, 2004, pp. 390- 400.

[7] John F. Richards, op. cit., pp. 390-391.

[8] Ibid., pp. 399-400.

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[9] See C. A. Bayly, 'India and West-Asia, C 1700- 1830', *Asian Affairs*. 19, 1 (1988), pp. 3-19.

[10] Richards, op.cit., p.4.

[11] Jos J. L. Gommans, *The Rise of the India-Afghan Empire: c. 1710- 1780*, Brill, Leiden, 1995.

[12] See Brajanath Badjena, *Samar Tarang*, Bidya Prakasha, edited by Dr. Debendra Mohanty, Bidya Prakashan, Cuttack, 2002.

[13] E. C. Dimock and P.C. Gupta, *The Maharashtra Purana*, Orinet Longman, 1962.

[14] See Stuart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders and State Formation in Eighteenth-Century India*, OUP, Delhi, 1994.

[15] Cited in Stuart Gordon, op.cit., p. 1.

[16] Jos J. L. Gommans, 'The Silent Frontier of South Asia, c. A.D., 1100- 1800', *Journal of World History*, Spring, 1998.

[17] Ibid., pp 2-3.

[18] Ibid., p .4.

[19] Ibid., p. 5.

[20] Ibid., p. 9.

[21] Ibid., p. 14.

[22] K. N. Chitins, *Medieval Indian History*, Atlantic publisher and Distributors, New Delhi, 2003, p. 132.

[23] Ibid., p. 133.

[24] Ravinder kumar, *Western India in the Nineteenth Century, A Study in the Social History of Maharashtra*, Routledge, London, first published, 1968. Reprint, 2007, p. 6.

[25] Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth Century Maratha Swarajya* , Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, p. 74-75.

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[26] Ibid., p. 100.

[27] The word *saranjam* means assignment of land to a person for military services.

[28] I am using the term power to mean a politico-military structure of the Marathas in the 18th century India and polity to mean an administrative setup under the Marathas in the same century. The Marathas developed a politico-military *structure in the eighteenth century based on the* "Maratha Confederacy' located in the Saranjamadar system. The sardars often marched into other territories on assumed legitimacy of the Marathas to do so. This often resulted in the use of force through raids. The military raids and battles resulted into extraction through an outpost and sometimes establishing rule which I have called polity.

[29] V. D. Divekar, 'The Emergence of An Indigenous Business Class in Maharashtra in the Eighteenth Century', *Modern Asian Studies*, 16, 3 (1982), pp. 427- 443, p. 428.

[30] Ibid., p. 428.

[31] Stuart Gordon, *The Marathas*... op. cit., p. 148.

[32] Randolf, G. S. Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaign and Contest for India: Struggle for Control over South Asia's Military Economy*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2004.

Chapter III

Maratha inroads into the East and Invasions in Orissa : 1741- 51

As underlined in the previous chapter, the Maratha confederacy was the fulcrum of the expansion of Maratha power and polity in the eighteenth century through the system of *Saranjam*. The confederacy was based on a tenuous relation between the centre and periphery. Though the centre as represented by King (Chhatrapati) at Satara as *de jure* head and the Peshwa at Pune, as *de facto* head, always tried to maintain cohesion by channelizing interest by way of creating spheres of influences for operation of the new set of *sardars* (Chiefs / Chieftains) who were a new set of politico-military gentry. The *sardars* combined military and administrative skills and powers. The Maratha confederacy was based upon sharing of the acquired or invaded territories which were treated as common to the Maratha Confederacy, it has to be emphasized that the fundamental basis of the origin, existence and endurance (sustenance) of the Confederacy was interest, with individual interest having primacy over the collective. The embeddedness of interest in the structure potentially led to the situations of conflicts which took the forms of conspiracy and seeking alliance against one another. The Maratha Confederacy created a legacy from the time of Balaji Vishwanath that 'conquest would be shared' seen first in the creation of Tanjore and subsequently, Kolhapur and division of new conquests in Malwa and Gujarat.

The Maratha Confederacy was formed when the Mughal Empire was breaking off. The formation of polity marked a major transition of the Maratha polity into a 'proto-imperial' power and polity mediated by the Confederacy. The transition was both systemic and spatial. The Maratha spatial transition took place from a 'Deccani'[1] regional entity or state formation to a trans-regional and sub-continental formation, this transition being from a resource poor region into resource rich regions. In other words, the Maratha polity located along the frontier between the dry, pastoral ecological zone transited into wet, humid ecological region. This movement and expansion was facilitated by the arid zone assets such as transport animals, war horses, trade routes and mobility and a political aspiration based upon economic needs and a desire to acquire and control the economic resources in the subcontinent, which also was inspired by its *longue duree* historical process and its conceptual resources.

Expansion beyond the *Swarjya* region in the Deccan both in the direction of the south and the north for acquisition and control of economic resources was marked in the Peshwa Baji Rao's ambitious expansionist policy to push into the north. At a time when Maharashtra was ravaged, Baji Rao had to provide a strategic regime to the Maratha polity (Confederacy) while convincing the 'inner circle' (*the Karbharis*) and the Chhatrapati Shahu about the direction and methodology. His strategic regime was presented by him which viewed that the Mughals were weak in Malwa and Gujarat, the Nizam was interested in the weakness of Delhi, therefore, would not intervene immediately, the administration would develop as new lands would be acquired and Baji Rao would personally lead the campaigns and bands for raid. Let the new conquest fill the treasure. Push the frontier to the north and give the heartland of Maharashtra time to recover.[2] In this strategic approach south was not to be immediately conquered, it could wait. This was the commencement of the Maratha statement of objective of expansion clearly articulated through a strategic regime.

Another outstanding fact of the period was that the Maratha Polity or the Maratha Confederacy stood on the premise that all the *sardars* would be 'co-sharers' of the polity in terms of its political and economic gains. The *Peshwa* played a pivotal role in the process by asserting his position vis-à-vis the *sardars* and the king by reducing the role of the king except in a *de jure* manner confining him to Satara. The Peshwa also created his own chiefs when new lands or regions were acquired. Peshwa, located in Pune was considered the seat of authority of the Maratha polity.

The history of the Maratha polity or Confederacy reveals a series of conflicts between the various *sardars* and *sardars* and the *Peshwa*, thanks to the territorial financial interest evinced by each *sardar*. Military was the most important instrument of the *sardars* who were chiefs in a *Saranjam* system and were new gentries. They could be seen politico-military force that determined the role of the polity in the eighteenth century politics of the Maratha political process.

Conflict embedded in the polity or Confederacy was often due to regional and financial aspirations nurtured by the all the co-sharers of the polity. The 'military economy' of the period and particularly of the Marathas demanded huge expenditures. It was based more often on attacks or raids and invasions for *Chauth*. The collections of tributes or *Chauth* from various territories or the local chiefs were never fully realized and went often into arrears. This has been amply proved by the role of bankers in the 'military economy'.

What, however, has emerged from the various correspondence and researches that the Marathas were always in debt thanks to the circumstance discussed above and the appropriations made at different levels before reaching its central point, Pune as its due. The state debt piled up. In 1758, Balaji Baji Rao convened a meeeting of the *sardars* to discuss the issue and defray by contributing to mitigate the state debt. But *sardars* also were not in a position to address the situation since they had little cash, something proved by a letter by Janakoji Shinde.[3]

In one of his letters Balaji Baji Rao remarked that "two rivers of gold [=*suvarna-ganga*], one of them from the north and another from the south, flowed Poona-wards, but that both of them dried up before they could reach Maharashtra."[4]

The payments to soldiers were always in arrears. However, there were some *sardar*s in the north such as in Rajasthan who were rich whereas the *sardars* around Maharashtra were not much affluent and yet were more affluent than the *Peshwa*.

This partly brings to the fore the nature of the Maratha polity, relations among the various agencies within polity or Confederacy such as the king, the Peshwa and the *sardars* in the eighteenth century. The Maratha 'military economy', an integral part of the Maratha power and polity of the century, shaped the very nature of conflict and co-sharing within the polity determining from time to time the nature, structure and process of such conflict. It is this inherent contradiction within the system or an embedded conflict within it that shaped the Maratha power and polity through the century, when it could not be resolved and personal aggrandizement overruled, the system fell apart.

The study of the Maratha invasion and rule in Odisha from 1741- 1803, as an the extension of this process of the Maratha power and polity or Maratha Confederacy, is what is to be examined at a local level based on micro historical process as represented by local sources and data, in order to contribute to the understanding of the larger process at work within the Maratha polity at the pan-India level.

The first Maratha conquest and levy of *Chauth* in the north eastern direction was made by Parsoji Bhonsle, independently of the *Peshwa*, whose conquest of Berar had been recognized by Shahu and as also the title of the *Sena Saheb Subha* held from the time of Raja Ram.[5] The *Sena Saheb Subha* was reconfirmed with the sanction of his exclusive right to Berar, Gondwana, Katak and some other Mahals in Hindusthan under Balaji Vishwanath's policy of expansion.[6] An assumption inbuilt into it was that the grant of three *sanads* of 1719 of *Swarajya*, *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi* was applicable here, though actually they were related only to the six Mughal Subahs in the Deccan.

The Bhonsles made direct collection of revenue under military assignment to the north of the Mughal Subha with "delegated power of *sikekatryar* from the Raja of Satara."[7] A further addition to their territories by way of conquest of *Chauth* collection became a part of Bhonsle's assignment. In 1720 Raghuji Bhonslae was a leader of large Maratha band and was confirmed in a grant from the Berar region (north eastern Maharashtra) who in turn kept a body of 5000 horses in the service of Shahu. [8]

Raghuji came to Nagpur in 1738 and Deogarh, the capital of the Gond kingdom of Cand Sultan who paid Chauth to Kanhoji, but not yet conquered, on invitation by the widow Cand Sultan against usurpation. He returned to Berar after solving the problem. In 1743 the Marathas were called again when there was a dissension and Marathas now acted as guardian of the Gond king. Now Raghuji remained at Nagpur brought the entire Deogarh under his sovereignty. This led to division of sovereignty between the Gond king and the Bhonsles as they shared authority in governance through a symbolic ritual of giving *tika* mark royalty by the Gond king to each successive Bhonsle rulers.[9] These events in Nagpur concerning the Gond king and Raghuji Bhonsle "perhas also reinforced their claim to superiority over other Maratha *sardars* elevated by the Peshwa - a claim which they originally derived from their putative or real relationship with the dynasty of Shivaji."[10] As the situations stood, it was only obvious that the Bhonsle Raja was apprehensive of the Brahmin Peshwa and was therefore accountable to the Raja of Satara. The differences between the two could be seen in 1742 when conflicts took place in Bengal during the invasion or raids in Bengal by Raghuji.

Entry of the Marathas under Raghuji Bhonsle into Odisha was an extension of the Maratha pan-Indian paradigm of 'conquest on invitation' followed by the Maratha Confederacy.

Located in Berar and Nagpur the Raghuji's sphere of influence had no other direction to extend than the east, i.e., Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. Sardesai argues that the Maratha invasion of Bengal and Odisha was the outcome of the rivalry between Raghuji Bhonsle and Balaji Baji Rao for hegemony in Maharashtra.[11] Three important developments engaged Raghuji in the late 1730s and early 1740s : Raghuji's successful Karnatak expedition, his relations with Nizam-ul-Mulk of Hyderabd after the Treaty of Bhopal in 1738 and the instability in the Bengal province after the invasion of Nadir Shah. The subhedari of Bengal was usurped by Alivardi Khan in 1740 with the revenue of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha being also usurped. Mir Habib, the dispossessed Governor of Odisha sough the intervention of Raghuji against Alivardi Khan. At the same time Peshwa was also contemplating an intervention in the affairs of Bengal on invitation by the relatives of the Slain Subhedar of Bengal, Sarfraz Khan. Alivardi also negotiated with the Peshwa and promised him *Chuath*, something the Peshwa had always desired, but thanks to intervention by Shahu in 1743 the issue was resolved in favour of Raghuji Bhonsle. Raghuji dreaded the new Peshwa's ambitions regarding the province and decided to forestall him by sending his army eastward at once. There are two possibilities: One, there was instigation either by Nizam-ul-Mulk or by a section of officers who did not like Alivardi, the usurper; and secondly, there was a lure of *chauth* of Bengal. [12]

The Maratha entry into the East (Bengal and Odisha) logically followed a series of historical situations elsewhere. A significant event was the grant of *sanads* by the Mughals to the Marathas to legitimately collect *chauth* from the Mughal *subahs* in the east. Broadly, there were three sets of circumstance, which were responsible for the Maratha eastern expansion, particularly into Odisha under the Bhonsles. The first set of circumstance are ascribable to the Mughals- in fact, the decline of the Mughals, the second, to internal conflict and contestation within the Maratha confederacy (power structure) and the third, the expedient situations in Odisha, as for example, the political vacuum or crisis during the period which engaged the attention of the Marathas as well as the situation in which Marathas were invited by some of the chiefs or administrators.

The Maratha polity during the period of the second Peshwa, Baji Rao experienced conflict of power and of interest. The Peswa's authority over Mughal *subahs* was challenged by *Senapati* Trimbak Rao Dhabade and the *Sena Sahib Subah* Raghuji Bhonsle. After some fluctuations of fortune and even bloody internecine wars, Baji Rao near the end of his life realized the practical limits of his own power and agreed to a scheme of amicably partitioning the Mughal provinces among the rival Maratha generals as their "spheres of influence", so that each *sardar* would be free to "plunder, tax and dominate over his special hunting ground" without the fear of encroachment or obstruction by any officer of his master.[13] The outcome was the distribution of territories: Gujrat, Berar and Dhar were placed under Dhabade, the Bhonsle and the Pawar families respectively; Malwa and Bundelkhand remained the Peshwa's own preserve, with direct access to Delhi.[14] The plunder of Madras and Karnatak was to be joint enterprise of several chiefs. Raghuji Bhonsle's ambition of ruling at Satara as his master's master in the place the Peshwa having been defeated by Bajirao's superior education and inborn genius for war and organization, he naturally pursued the path of expansion left open to him in the north east and east of his domain of Nagpur, namely by raiding Bengal, Bihar and Odisha, across the intervening jungles and hills.[15] This was added to by the invitation he received from the 'domestic enemies'. The moment was opportune since his recent Karnatak venture had brought him no gain owing to "too many greedy rivals having entered the field". His raids into Peshwa's spheres of influence had failed and he was now sunk head over ears in debt from his inflated army expenditure.[16] Only one path of relief was open to him namely the plunder of Bengal, whose wealth was proverbial throughout India and which had paid no *chauth* to the Marathas up to now.[17]

First, despite Bhonsle's success in the South (Karnatak) and his having brought a lot of wealth from the South, Raghuji's claim to the south was not honoured by the Peshwa. In fact it ultimately became Peshwa's "exclusive sphere of influence". Having failed here and also failed to dominate over Shahu, Raghuji Bhonsale, was contemplating plunder towards the north-east of his dominion. Nizam-ul-Mulk of Hyderabad who was always in fear of Maratha raids was instigating

Raghuji in his design. When the relatives and faithful followers of the dispossessed Governor of Odisha, persuaded him in this matter, he entrusted Bhaskar Pandit, his prime minister with the task of invading the kingdom of Alivardi.[18] Situation from the side of the Mughals were perhaps conducive. The decline of the Mughal Empire presented an opportunity by which the Marathas profited more than any other people of India.[19]

At the time of Aurangzeb's death (1707), Murshid Quli Khan had occupied three positions: deputy governor (naib nazim) of Bengal, full governor of Odisha and *diwan* or revenue chief of these two provinces. Farukhsiyar on his accession (1713) made him the deputy governor of Bengal and in 1717 the "substantive governor" in addition to his diwanship. In 1714 full governorship was conferred upon him. Murshid Quli's strong, honest and efficient administration, love of justice, enforcement of peace and order greatly increased the wealth and happiness of the people and fostered the growth of trade in the country. He was succeeded by his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din Muhammad Khan surnamed Shuja-ud-daula (Asad Jang) in the rule of the two provinces. Bihar was added to it by the Emperor about 1733. On the death of Shuja (13th March 1739), his son Sarfaraj Khan (entitled Ala-ud-daulah Haidar Jang) became *Subahdar* of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. His excess "licentiousness, which (as often happens in the east) he indulged in under the cloak of constant devotion to religious practices and resort to the society of theologians, caused a rapid decline in the administration".[20] The evil was aggravated by the new Nawab's hostility to Alivardi Khan and his elder brother Haji Ahmad, who had been the ablest and best-equipped officer during the last two reigns. Alivardi, knowing that his life and honour would be attacked by his worthless master whenever caught at a disadvantage, decided to strike the first blow in self-defense. With remarkable skill and courage, he led an expedition from Patna (where he was deputy governor) into Bengal, defeated and slew Sarafraj at the battle of Gheria (10th April 1740) and made himself Nawab of the three provinces, after securing a recognition of his act of might from Emperor by profuse bribery.[21] This act of usurpation opened the floodgate of trouble on Bengal by encouraging in others the desire to intimate his illegal violence and open defiance of the imperial Government.[22]

imitate?

Thus, in the eighteenth century, Nawab's (Nawab of Bengal) hold over administration of Odisha was growing weaker. In the battle of Gheria fought between Sarfaraj, son of Shujauddin and Nawab of Bengal and Alivardi Khan, Sarfaraj was defeated and killed. Alivardi seized the throne of Bengal and declared himself the master of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. Rustam Jang originally known as Murshid Quli Khan II, son-in-law of Shujauddin, the Governor of Odisha was not prepared to recognize the authority of Alivardi Khan. Consequently, in a battle which was fought between Alivardi Khan and Rustam Jang at Phulwari (four miles north of Balasore town) in 1741 the latter was defeated and fled away to Masulipatam, with his son-in-law Mirza Baqar who felt much more wounded in his heart than his father-in law, at their expulsion from Odisha.

The Subahdari of Odisha being now vacant Alivardi appointed Sayyid Ahmad Khan, his second son-in-law as the Deputy Governor of Odisha, assisted by Gurjar Khan at the head of an army of three thousand cavalry and four thousand infantry.[23] Sayyid Ahmad adopted three measures: reduction of troops, raiding of houses of such persons suspected to have hoarded wealth and procuring girls for his harem. These activities created widespread discontentment.

Mirza Baqar found the situation quite propitious and asked Rustam Jung to invade Odisha. But on his refusal he instigated discontented people who under the leadership of Shah Murad gathered together in a conspiracy to break into open revolt against the government, in which they were joined by native soldiers and some employees in Sayyid Ahmad's household.[24] One day in the month of August 1741 the people revolted.[25] Gujar khan was killed. Mirza Baqar marched to Cuttack and imprisoned Sayyid Ahmad with his children, wife and relative in the fort of Barabati. Then he conquered Midnapur and Hijli. On hearing this Alivadi Khan proceeded to Cuttack with a huge army. As he approached Cuttack, at the sight of the size of the troops, Mirza Baqar fled. After the rescue of Sayyid Ahmad, Alivardi appointed Shaikh Masum to govern Orissa.[26] Thereafter Alivari left Cuttack and proceeded against the raja of Mayurbhanj who had recently helped Mirza Buqar against him. This was the political condition before the Marathas appeared on the scene.

Bhaskar Pandit entered Odisha possibly through the Barmula pass on the ill defended western frontier at the head of an army.[27] The Barabati fort was captured in 1742. Bhaskar moved to Panchet; Midnapur, Burdwan as far as Balasore were systematically plundered and fell into his possession. Maratha detachments were busy plundering countries as far as the river Ganges towards Murshidabad all through the rainy season.[28]

The first Maratha invasion of Bengal took place on 15 April 1742, by a light Maratha cavalry. The Nawab was encircles and his supply was cut off. While one party engaged the Nawab for a weak another party plundered the countryside within a range of forty miles. The Nawab escaped to Katwa. As Bhaskar Pandit was planning to return to Nagpur, Mir Habib requested him for another invasion with a lure of huge plunder and attack on Murshidabad. "With 700 select Maratha horsemen the raiding party in one night covered about forty miles and reached Dahipara (6th May 1742), burnt its bazaar, then crossing over to Murshidabad itself plundered it for one day without any opposition, taking thee lakhs of rupees from the house of the banker Jagat Seth alone."[29] They retreated to Katwa and made it their head quarter of army occupation.

The Maratha roving bands now continued their plunder all over the places where the Nawab had lost control, mostly the territories to the east of river Ganga. An English factor reported in 1742, "the Marathas are plundering Birbhum which has put a stop to all business, the merchants and businessmen flying wherever they can."[30] An English business man Holwell writes "they committed the most horried devastation and cruelties fed their horses and cattle with mulberry plantations and thereby injured the silk manufacturers."[31]

Soon after the rainy season the Marathas were defeated near Katwa by Alivardi from where they fell back to Ramgarh to ravage Odisha. In the meantime Masum had gathered strength and had encamped near Cuttack. He was killed. Thus, Cuttack together with Barabati fort fell into Maratha possession. On hearing this Alivardi marched with his army, towards Midnapur. Frightened, Bhaskar fled to Balasore. Hotly pursued by the Nawab's soldiers, he with the Marathas ran into the Deccan by crossing Chilka on the southern boundary of Odisha.

Alivardi stayed at Cuttack for two months. He appointed Abdul Nabi Khan, uncle of Mustafa Khan, a powerful Afghan leader in the court of Murshidabad. Considering his administrative inexperience, Raja Durlabharam was appointed as *peshkar* or agent.[32]

Soon after the departure of Alivardi, Raghuji invaded Odisha with a big army and captured Cuttack. He left Bhaskar at Midnapur and proceeded to Katwah for extracting *chauth* of Bengal on an application from Delhi Emperor.[33] Accordingly after his march to Murshidabad the Peshwa entered into a negotiation with Alivardi Khan at Plassey on 31st March 1743 in which the latter agreed to pay the *chauth* of Bengal to Raja Shahu and 22 Lakhs of rupees to the Peshwa for the expenses of his army.[34] Two allies decided to drive Raghuji from Bengal; so Raghuji, in fear soon left Katwah and went back to Nagpur. Bhaskar also raised his camp Midnapur and followed his master. On 31 August 1743, a compromise was effected between the Peshwa and Raghuji at the suggestion of Raja Shahu. As a result, Bengal, Odisha and the portion east of Patna was assigned to the latter. So Bhaskar invaded Odisha on his way to Bengal through Midnapur.[35]

Worried, Alivardi invited Bhaskar to an interview on 31st March 1744 for settling the issues of *chauth* and treacherously killed Bhasker along with 21 of his generals. At this the Marathas fled away to Nagpur from both Bengal and Odisha. The Nawab distributed a bounty of ten lakhs of rupees to his troops.[36]

Despite the Maratha flight conditions in Odisha remained volatile. Mustafa Khan rebelled against Alivardi. Abdul Nabi Khan was indecisive about his loyalty. After his death, his son Abdul Rasul became the deputy governor of Odisha. He decided to fight Alivardi. So Odisha was left without a ruler. So Raja Dulabhram was appointed to that office with a brigade of three thousand horses. Some spies were employed by Raghuji who lived in Odisha as *sanyasis*.[37] They were supplying information concerning the conduct of Durlabhram and the weakness of his government. During this time, in order to take revenge on Alivardi, Mustafa Khan invited Raghuji to invade Bengal. Raghuji, seeing this as an opportune time marched at the head of fourteen thousand horses and crossing the mountain track and leaving Sambalpur on the left reached Odisha in March, 1745.[38]

Durlabhram offered no resistance and soon surrendered. Maratha forces laid siege to the fort of Barabati, defended by Abdul Aziz from inside. In the mean time Raghuji sent Maratha raiding parties to other parts of Odisha as far as Midnapur and Hugli. A major portion of Burdwan was too plundered. When the provisions ran short Abdul Aziz was forced to surrender the fort on May 1745. The Marathas moved to Burdwan thereafter.

It is during this time that Murtaza Khan, son of Mustafa, Buland Khan and a few other Afghans invited Raghuji to Bihar for their rescue. Raghuji joined them. But Alivardi gave Raghuji a crushing defeat at Ramdigarh near Katwah. Raghuji left the place for Nagpur but before that he entered into an agreement with Mir Habib that he should pay eleven lakhs of rupees for the use of his army in acquiring the possession of Odisha.[39] Three thousand Maratha horsemen and six or seven thousand Afghans were left under the command of Mir Habib.[40] With them he plundered and took possession of Odisha and stationed soldiers at Midnapur, where some Afghans dismissed by Alivardi joined them.[41]

The activities of the Marathas on the frontier of Odisha forced Alivardi to take some measure. He appointed Ahmad Khan as the Governor of Odisha and Mir Jafar his deputy. They Marched from Murshidabad at the head of 7000 horse and 12000 foot in November 1746. After a few days of March he defeated a band of the Marathas at Midnapur. Marathas fled to Balasore through Jaleswar. Mir Habib encamped on the bank of river Barabalang, a distance of two miles, with 8,000 horse and 20,000 foot. There he was busy in raising batteries in order to oppose Mir Jafar. Vessels were also fitted with cannons.[42]

Mir Jafar encamped on the northern side of Kenhasa (Kensai river). Here he got report that Januji had already reached Cuttack with a large army to help Mir Habib. He suddenly decamped and marched to Burdwan. He was hotly pursued by Januji's army who captured some of his baggage and elephants. Attaulla Khan and Fakrulla Khan were sent by Alivardi to assist him. They fought an indecisive battle with Januji but soon entered into a conspiracy to divide the kingdom of Alivardi by assassinating him.[43] Therefore, Alivardi himself led the army against the Marathas. After furious contests between Alivardi and Januji, the later took the road to Midnapur. Rainy season having set in, Alivardi too returned to Murshidabad. The Marathas were thus left master of Odisha up to Midnapur all through the year 1747. From here parties were sent to Dacca and Murshidabad to plunder. Then Januji went to Patna where he was allied with Shamshir Khan and other Afghans who rebelled against Alivardi.[44] Alivardi defeated them at Rani Sarai on 18 April 1748. Januji fled from the battlefield and planned to plunder Murshidabad in Alivardi's absence, but had to leave for Nagpur at the news of the death of his mother. Mir Habib remained at Midnapur joined by

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Raghuji's younger son. During the period Midnapur was the headquarters of the Marathas.

Alivardi sent Hyder Ali Khan towards Burdwan. He himself also proceeded in the middle of March. At Burdwan Hyder Ali did not obey the order of the Nawab because of the nonpayment of arrears to his troops. Alivardi continued his march and reached Balasore on 8 May 1748. A part of his forces, which had successfully sent the Marathas away when they were planning to plunder the English factory, was sent under the command of Nilla Pandit. Having learnt that Mar Habib had fled into jungles of Cuttack Alivardi proceeded further and encamped at Bara about 36 miles north of Cuttack. Regular searches were made but with no avail. The entire march in hot summer and exhaustive search had exhausted his soldiers. As a result his force had been reduced to 300 worn-out horsemen only when he reached Cuttack at noon on 17 May 1749.[45] The Nawab invested the fort of Barabati. He entered the city of Cuttack on 18 May 1749 and fifteen days later received the surrender of Barabati.[46]

The (re)conquest of Orissa was complete. But it was easier to conquer than to hold Cuttack for the ruler of Bengal with the Marathas permanently in occupation of its southern and western flanks, innumerable tracks through the jungles leading out of these places, and a single long and difficult route connecting Cuttack with Bengal which was closed by flood during half the year.[47] Nobles declined the governorship of Odisha.[48] At last a beggar named Saikh Abdus Subhan was finally appointed as the Governor of the province.[49] Alivardi left Cuttack hastily for Bengal to avoid approaching rainy season, which would render the innumerable streams across his path impassable.[50]

The Marathas under Mir Habib recovered Cuttack in about seven days after the departure of Alivardi. The news reached Alivardi near Balasore on 16 July 1749. But Alivardi continued homeward with his fatigued troops. He fell ill at Murshidabad till October 1749.

The Marathas, having recovered Cuttack marched towards the north under Mir Habib and Mohan Singh and encamped at Balasore on 17 October 1749. With the rearing guard consisting of Pathans the number swelled to forty thousand men.[51] After ravaging Orissa they raided Bengal at the end of February 1750. Murshidabad along with neighboring places was subject to occasional raids.[52]

After recovery from illness Alivardi drove out the Marathas from Midnapur. Skirmishes continued for some time. In March 1750, while Alivardi was at Midnapur, the Marathas marched towards Murshidabad plundering all the way. Alivardi pursued them. The Marathas appeared again at Midnapur.

Alivardi marched back. The Marathas fled. Alivardi left for Bihar because of a conspiracy to siege the throne of Bihar leaving Durlabhram and Mir Jafar. Here he fell ill. The two generals could not do anything to check the Maratha raids. Alivardi chased the Marathas with a big army till they returned to Odisha. Tired, he returned to Murshidabad.

Both sides were now eager for peace.[53] Raghuji was more involved in debt than ever before; as a financial speculation his invasion of eastern province had failed.[54] His income from the conquest of the poor province like Odisha had not covered his expenses. When in 1749, his son Sabaji beat a hurried retreat from that province to Nagpur, his soldiers pressed Raghuji hard for their heavy arrears of salary and the Raja had not the means of satisfying them or any other creditor.[55] A friendly arrangement with the Nawab would give the Marathas an assured income without the expense of collecting it fitfully and by force.[56]

Alivardi Khan was 75 years old. His troops had got exhausted because of continuous campaigns. His subjects in western and southern Bengal had been utterly impoverished by the early raids and destruction wrought by the *Bargis*.[57] His government had been reduced to bankruptcy. So listened to his well wishers and sent Mir Zafar to mediate and open peace negotiation.[58] Mir Zafar sent two of his men to Habib, who welcomed the proposal and dispatched his own agent Mirza Salia with the Bengal envoys to Mir Zafar, who introduced him to the Nawab, then at Katwa. The party proceeded in the Nawab's train to Murshidabad where the terms were settled.[59] The draft treaty was referred to the court of Nagpur and finally in June 1751 a peace was signed on the following conditions:

1. Mir Habib became a servant of Alivardi and was designated *naib nazim* (deputy governor) of Odisha on his behalf. He was required to pay the surplus revenue of the province to Raghuji's army as their salary.
2. Twelve lakh of rupees a year would be paid to Raghuji as *chauth* for the province from the revenue of Bengal
3. The Maratha government would desist from making raids in Bengal, Alivardi's domain. The frontier of Bengal was fixed at and including the river Suvarnarekha near Jalesar, and the Marathas were not to cross again as per the conditions of the treaty. Thus the district of Midanpur was once more joined to Bengal.

A year after the conclusion of the peace Januji arrived at Katak as his father's representative and took charge of the Maratha army. The Maratha Brahmins were chafing under Mir Habib's rule, and refused take their order from him any longer as he was now Alivardi's officer, not Raghuji's.[60] Habib as a good administrator could not have allowed the extortion and speculation of dear to the hearts of Maratha officers in a newly conquered province, and his honesty and care for the people made him, hateful to these 'blood-suckers'.[61] They compelled Janoji to call upon Habib to render account of the income and expenditure of the province and the division of the *chauth* of Bengal between the Maratha and Afghan soldiers. Janoji agreed. A plot was hatched to get rid of Habib. Habib realized the plot and tried to flee, but was killed on 24 August 1752.[62]

Musalih-ud-din Muhammed Khan, a courtier of Raghuji succeeded Mir Habib as the *naib nazim* of Odisha. But technically he was representative of Alivardi Khan. But for all practical purposes he was a servant of Raghuji. Thus, in a few years Odisha passed entirely out of the hands of the *subehdar* of Bengal and Bihar and became a Maratha province. This was one permanent result of '*Bargi* invasions'. Another was that it showed the way for organized looting of Bengal and Bihar to the up-country robber bands calling themselves *sanyasis* and *fakirs*, whom it required the genius of Warren Hastings to suppress.[63]

"It is a mistake to say that Alivardi ceded Odisha to the Marathas. The terms of the treaty of 1751 clearly show that the province was divided into two parts; of the northern and more civilized corner, which included the more important cities of Midnapur and Jalesar, he retained full possession and government; the southern and more, sparsely populated portion including the great trade centre of Balasore, the capital Katak, and the holy city of Puri, was to be governed by his own officers, but its revenue was assigned to the Marathas or in other words, it became one vast *jagir* for them without any change in the territorial sovereignty. This was the theory; but in practice the weakness of Alivardi's successors, the revolution at the court of Murshidabad and the confusion attending the transfer of the real power from the titular Nawab to the English Company, all enabled the Marathas to run their fiscal right over Orissa into full political sovereignty and annex it to their kingdom of Berar."[64]

The Maratha invasion of Odisha produced some effects. Politically, these invasions kept Alivardi occupied mainly with war with the Marathas, instigated sedition in his own offices and weakened the government of Bengal. This helped the rise of English. The invasions created a sort of anarchical atmosphere in Odisha for about a decade. The feudal chiefs grew more powerful.[65] The southern part of the country was less affected by the Maratha raids than the northern part which was a parading ground not only of the Maratha soldiers but also of the Muslim army who charged and fought with them. Thus economically there was decline in trade, commerce, industries and agriculture. The Maratha invasion caused a great deal of migration.

The Maratha invasion of Odisha was fundamentally due to the location of Odisha in the proximity of Nagpur and the Gond Territory, thus allowing the possibility of the extension in this eastward direction thanks to the spatial continuity. What is however more fundamental and immediate was the lure of the revenue of Bengal at a time when it was passing through a phase of political instability and turmoil following the invasion by Nadir Shah. Added to all these factors, the possibility of Peshwa's entry into the fray, which in fact did happen for a while until the intervention by Shahu in 1743, hastened the process and preempted invasion. From 1741-1751, the invasions were directed against Bengal and force the Bengal Subhedar to pay *Chauth* or tribute. Odisha in this narrative became a strategic point, point of logistic and command, reinforcement of forces.

The treaty of 1751 between Alivardi Khan and Raghuji Bhonsle led to the occupation of Odisha by the Marathas and Barabati in Katak was taken over by the Marathas where a Maratha contingent was stationed. The surviving Maratha barrack at the Barabati is a clear testimony to it.

There were many effects of invasions in Odisha during the period.[66] Economic historians have shown how a flourishing textile industry around Balashore and many commercial and economic activities faced instability and closer. There have been reports by the British officials about economic displacement. The entire geographical stretch between Cuttack and Balashaore and Bengal (Midnapur) is extremely fertile and high yielding. Constant wars or invasions, raids etc. destroyed the productivity of the region. The Maratha changing military doctrine and logistics, which involved cutting off the enemy's supply line resulted in the burring of villages, properties, fodder, food etc., by the Maratha forces in order starve the enemy's forces or deprive the enemy of logistic facility or reinforcements.

Tragedies, miseries, poverty that resulted in this region of Odisha and Bengal have been reflected not only in the British accounts, travel writings, but also in the contemporary local vernacular eve-witness accounts in epic and *puranic* forms and later in the forms of historical novels and plays. This continued to exist in deep memories of these societies, something which will be discussed in the following chapters.[67]

Notes and References

[1]. The Marathas have been referred to as '*Deccanis'* in the contemporary Persian writings.

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[3] G. S. Khare, 'The Marathas as Freebooters', in A. G. Pawar (ed.), *Maratha History Seminar,* Shivaji University, Kohlapur, 1971, pp. 213-218, p. 214.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India, Agrarian Politics and Society Under the Eighteenth Century Maratha Svarjaya,* Camridge University Press, 1986, p. 108.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas*.... op. cit., p. 124.

[9] Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty*...op. cit., p. 108.

[10] Ibid.

[11] G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, Phoenix Publication Bombay, 1848.

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[13] B. C. Roy, *Orissa under the Marathas*, KItab Mahal, Allahbad, 1960, pp. 34-35

[14] Ibid, p.35.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Siyar Engl. Tr. P. 375-6- cited in B. C. Ray, *Orissa Under the Marathas*, p.10.

[19] Jadunath Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire,* Vol. 1, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1932, p. 34.

[20] Ibid., p.36.

[21] Ibid.

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[23] Tabtabai Ghulam Hussain, *Siyar- ul –Muta- kherin*, Eng. Tr., p. 327-53.

[24] B. C. Roy, *Orissa Under the Marathas*, op cit., pp.8-9.

[25] Ibid, p.9.

[26] Bengal Letter to Court 23rd Dec., 1741- in B. C. Roy, op. cit. p. 9.

[27] B. C. Roy, op. cit. 10.

[28] Bengal Letter to Court, 30 Oct., 1742 para 6 and 25- Roy op. cit., p. 10.

[29] Sir Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), *History of Bengal, Vol. II, Muslim Period 1200- 1757*, The University of Decca, 1848, p. 456.

[30] Ibid. p. 457.

[31] Ibid.

[32] *Siyar*, English Tr., op. cit. P. 421.

[33] B. C. Roy, op. cit., p. 11.

[34] Bengal Letter to Court 13th August, 1743- Roy op. cit., p. 11.

[35] *Siyar*, Eng. Tr., op. cit., P. 421.

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[36] Sarkar, op. cit., p. 53.

[37] B. C. Roy, op. cit. p12.

[38] Ibid, p.12.

[39] G. S. Sardesai, *Selection from Peshwa Daftar*, Vol. 20 (1717- 74), p. 41.

[40] B. C. Roy, op. cit. p. 14.

[41] Siyar, Eng. Tr., op.cit., p. 23.

[42] Bengal letter to Court 22nd Feb, 1747, para 110.

[43] *Siyar*, Eng. Tr., op. cit., p. 24.

[44] Ibid. p.50.

[45] Jadunath Sarkar, op. cit., p. 78.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Bengal Public Consultations, 26th October, 1749, p. 20, cited in B. C. Roy, *Orissa Under the Marathas*, p. 18.

[52] Siyar, Eng. Tr.,op. cit., p. 86.

[53] Jadunath Sarkar, op. cit., 81.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Jadunath Sarkar, op. cit. 82.

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[61] Ibid.

[62] The date has been given in a French factory letter, Chandarnagar to Masulipatam, dated 11 Oct. 1752. See Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire,* Vol. 1, p. 83.

[63] Jadunath Sarkar, op. cit. p. 83.

[64] Cited in Sarkar, op. cit., pp. 83- 84.

[65] B. C. Roy, op. cit. p. 20.

[66] I refer to the military events in Odisha from 1741-42 to 1751 as invasions in Odisha rather than invasions of Odisha, for they were basically directed against the Bengal Orissa was only a corridor for the purpose.

[67] Fakir Mohan's Atma Charita *Atma Charita* (edited by Dr. Manoranjan Pradhan), Agradutta, Cuttack, 2005. Lacchma, Friends Publishers, Cuttack, 2002 (8th edition). (Odia) and Gangaram, *The Maharashtra Purana: An Eighteenth Century Bengali Historical Text*, trans. Edward C. Dimock and P. C. Gupta, Orient Longman, Calcutta, 1962. Ray, Nishikanta Basu, *Bange Bargi*, 1922.

Chapter IV

Maratha Rule in Orissa: Politics, Administration and Economy, 1751- 1803

The Maratha invasions in Odisha from 1741-42 to 1753 were basically directed against the Bengal Provincial government. Odisha was affected, perhaps in a massive way for the following reasons :

1. Odisha's contiguity with the Gondwana region and the spatial continuation ;
2. If the Bhonsles wanted to have any military operation in terms of invasion or raids against the Bengal province for the purpose of forcing them to pay *Chauth* or tribute, Baramula pass would be a preferred pass to use, which the Marathas did;
3. Odisha was a subhah under the Bengal province, Nawabi and the Subhedar of Odisha, Mir Habib had sought the Maratha help against usurpation in Bengal by Alivardi Khan and Mir Habib's dispossession of his Subhedari position;

4. The strategic significance and logistic support from and through Odisha as well as possibility of very little resistance from Odishan chiefs, either in the *Garhjat* or in the *Mughalbandi* region.[1]

The strategic importance of Odisha increased once again after the British conquest created a foothold in Bengal after the Treaty of Allahbad in 1765 and acquisition of Northern *Sarakrs* (circars) from the Nizam of Hyderabad in order to have military, commercial and strategic corridor between the Bengal presidency and the Madras presidency as well to connect the coastal strip from Bengal (Calcutta) to Madras. Thus Odisha had different importance to these stakeholders at different times.

A sketch of Odisha has been provided by Andrew Stirling[2], a British officer who made the first systematic attempt at writing the history of Odisha through a series of articles published in the Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal which were published in a book form in 1852.[3] Odisha extends from 18th to 22nd degree of north latitude, bounded by Bengal in the north and Godavari in the south, on the east is Bay of Bengal and Gondwana province on the West. In the length from North-East to South-West, it may be estimated at 400 miles, by 70 the average breadth. [4] It had two broad divisions, the coastal comprised of five districts and the 'mountainous unproductive region on the Western frontier.' The chief rivers are Godavari, Mahanadi and Subarnarekha besides innumerable hill streams of a short course and small channel. The principal towns were *Cuttack, Jaggernauth*, *Ganjam* and *Vizagapatam*.[5] "The degree of authority exercised by the sovereign power throughout the extensive territory fluctuated of course greatly at different periods, depending on the personal character of the reigning prince, the circumstances of the times, and the conduct, resources, and dispositions the numerous dependent rajas and feudatories, whose principalities, or jurisdiction have at all times formed so remarkable and important a feature in the political geography of Orissa."[6]

Thus when the Marathas took over the administration of Odisha, the political geography of Odisha was shaped by the natural and historical forces. Odisha was broadly divided politically into two broad divisions the hilly, mountainous regions and the other coastal plain.

The Maratha possession of Odisha, may be seen as an outcome of the conflict with the *Nawab* of Bengal which resulted in the massive destruction of local economic or material resources. This is not to suggest that Odisha would not have been occupied by the Marathas. As has been have suggested and supported by the contemporary documents as well as the logic of the Maratha expansion, the Bhonsles' objective of expansion into this region was a foregone conclusion. But the process would have been different.

Thus, Odisha experienced the fury of the Maratha aggression during the period of invasion from 1741-42 to 1751. By the treaty of 1751, the Nawab of Bengal was to pay an annual tribute of 12 lacs of rupees in lieu of *Chauth* of Bengal and Bihar to the Marathas and 'cessation of portion of revenue of Odisha to the raja of Nagpur'. The area which was ceded by the Nawab of Bengal to the Raja of Nagpur in 1751 extended from the Subarnarekha in the north to the Chilka lake in the South.

Odisha was divided into two broad divisions since the time of the Mughal rule- the *Mughalbandi* and the *Garhjat*. The Mughalbandi comprised the coastal districts of north Odisha was divided into 150 *Parganas* placed under 32 *amils* or revenue commissioners.[7] The emergence of *Mughalbandi* and *Garhjat* as administrative divisions is traced back to the Mughals after their occupation of Odisha in 1593 from the Afghans. The Mughals brought under their direct control the entire coastal Odisha and divided them into five *sarkars*- Jaleshar, Bhadrak, Kataka, Kalinga dandapat and Rajmunderi.[8] The Garhjat region consisted of the native chiefs (Kings and Zamindars) who agreed to pay fixed revenue annually.

The two political divisions in Odisha traced back to the time of the Mughals, were the *Mughalbandi* and *the Garhjat*. The Mughalbandi [9] was under direct administration of the Marathas. The *Garhjat* states or territories which were to the west of the *Mughalbandi* in the hilly mountainous and forest regions, were often inaccessible, were left autonomous as earlier during the Mughal period. The chiefs of the region had to pay allegiance to the Maratha Government and accept their overlordship.[10] In fact, they were in the position of intermediary superiors between the tenants of the soil and the Maratha Government, which did not exercise any civil jurisdiction over, or enforce any regulations upon these tributary states.[11] The light quit rent or the tributes demanded by the Maratha Government were not uniform. While a small state like Nilgiri, with very little income, paid an annual tribute of Rs. 6,000 only, no tribute was paid by the raja of Dashapalla because he supplied timber for construction of Ratha (chariot), for the annual Chariot festival of Lord Jagananth in Puri. Similarly the raja of Keonjhar paid an annual tribute of 3,000 only and the Raja of Khurda paid a *peshkash* of Rupees 10, 000.

The raja of Khurda was the most powerful among the *Garhjat* chiefs who exercised ritual authority vis-à-vis the other princes or chiefs and conferred titles to other chiefs. It is this ritual role and his ritual association with the Jagannath temple which made him hegemonic in the sense of his ritual sovereignty or the ritual role. There were *Jagirdars* in the tributary state of Khurda, paying light quit rent to the Raja in *cowries* denominated *tanki*. A large part of the *jagirdars*, the hereditary chief of the military of the state, were the *dalbeheras* followed in hierarchy by the *dalais.* Every estate which a *dalbehera* possessed had a principal garh (fortress of brick, stone and mud) to which was attached a band of *paik,* a native hereditary militia trained in the use of bows and arrows. The *paiks* held land from the *jagirdars,* on the lowest terms. They were in fact the 'peasant soldiers'.

The Maratha Government extended protection to the tributary states in the event of any external attack or aggression. For example Birakishore Deo, the raja of Khurda requested for the help of the Marathas when Nararayan Deo the chief of Paralakhmundi in Ganjam invaded him. Sheo Bhat Sathe, the Maratha Governor of Odisha promised to help him on the condition that he would pay for the soldiers' expenses. After the expulsion of the Paralakhemundi chief, the raja of Khurda had to mortgage the *parganas* of Lembai, Rahang and Purisottam Chhatar to the Mararhas in lieu of the payment. Better relations between the Garhjat chiefs were sought by the Maratha Government. In case of dispute between the chiefs related to their boundaries etc., the Marathas intervened and arbitrated. In

1775, when Baramba was attacked by the raja of Narasinhapur, the Raja of Baramba appealed to the Maratha Government which in turn settled the dispute and restored the two forts (Kharod and Ratapot) to the raja of Baramaba. In another dispute between the raja of Angul and the raja of Dashpalla, about the possession of Jormuha, the Marathas arbitrated on request and settled by granting a *sanad* in respect of the place in dispute to the raja of Dashapalla.

Though the Maratha government desisted from interfering in the internal matters of the tributary states, it interfered in the event of misgovernment. On the grounds of 'lunncy and incompetence' a chief was removed and replaced by a suitable chief from the same family. When, the raja of Khurda, Birakishore Deo killed two of his children in state of mind considered madness, the Maratha Government confined him in the fort of Barabati and raised Divyasinha Deva to the throne.[12]

The Maratha Government did not accept insubordination of the chiefs which sometimes did happen. The Government suppressed it since it possessed the necessary capability having maintained a large army. In fact the military expenditure at Cuttack (the capital of Odisha at this time) alone was estimated at seven lakhs of rupees. A cavalry for 2000 was always stationed here.[13]

There are instances when the Maratha Government's orders were defied. These cases began to happen with the rise of the British in Bengal who encouraged defiance among the chiefs against the Marathas. The raja of Mayurbhanj and the raja of Dhenkanal serve as instances. The raja of Dhenkanal was responsible for the murder of Buli Khan, the adopted son of Sheo Bhat Sathe, the Maratha Subhedar of Odisha. So Bhabani Pandit attacked Dhenkanal to bring him to his knees. The raja of Dhenkanal grudgingly surrendered but was secretly in contact with the British and the Nazim of Bengal. He stopped paying his tribute which went into arrears. A demand of 6000 cowries was made from the raja as *peshkash*. While the raja ignored, he also encouraged other rajas such as the raja of Kujang and of Harihapur to stop paying which they did. So Rajaram Pandit proceeded against him but faced heavy resistance and withdrew.[14]

When Chimanji (the second son of Madhoji) the raja of Nagpur arrived in Odisha around the same time, he was persuaded by the Governor, upon which both of them proceeded against the raja of Dhenakanal. The raja of Keonjhar supplied 200 soldiers to assist the Marathas. Despite vigorous resistance, Dhenkanal king was defeated and was forced to pay the arrears and continued to regularly thereafter.

The raja of Mayurbhanj too had also a similar problem of not paying regularly tributes to the Marathas. After the defeat of the raja of Dhenkanal, Chimanji planned an invasion against the raja of Mayurbhanj. On getting the wind of it the raja panicked and surrendered.

The Maratha dealing of the issue concerning the wreck of British vassal on the coast near Kujang in which the chief of Kujang was found by the Nagpur court to have dealt with the issue in an unfair way and the consequent instruction to the Maratha Subhedar at Cuttack to address the issue shows, the Maratha level of intervention in various local affairs including the coastal ones involving the British.

The Marathas did abolish some *zamindaries* to bring them directly under the administration which shows that Marathas were less lenient towards the *Mughalbandi* than they were towards the *Garhjat* or the tributary states or *chiefs*. But in regard to Bengal which was considered an enemy its instruction was very clear : "you should, as planned, burn, destroy and plunder Bengal."[15]

The Marathas had a large military camp at Cuttack and occasional quick march of the Maratha soldiers form Nagpur towards the Western tributary states of Orissa.

In the *Mughalbandi* region, which was under the direct control and administration of the Marathas, the Marathas seem to have followed a structure in existence created by the Mughals. As reported by the British officers after the occupation of Odisha, the Maratha revenue practices led to several changes in the hierarchical changes in the revenue administrative hierarchy in the Mughalbandi region. They also inform us of a different practice of the Marathas which led to creation of new *zamindars.*

It can be gleaned from the revenue records that during the preceding period when Odisha was under the Mughals included in the administrative possession of the *Nawab* of Bengal, a large number of Bengali officers were in various administrative charges or positions in Odisha. But under the Marathas the scenarios seemed to have changed in favour of the locals, a process which has been called 'Oriazation' of the revenue administration in Odisha under the Marathas. It appears that the most of the Sadr Quanogos, Chaudhuries and Wilayati Quanongos of the Mughal times ceased to be the revenue officials under the Marathas. They became estate holders. The posts were probably filled up by new hands or by some of the old officials who did not own estates.[16]

Revenue settlements were done often through bidding through which *zaminadars* were created. "Broadly, at the time of British acquisition the *zamindars* of Odisha were either principal *mokadams* with a hereditary right of collection, but without any right, title, or interest in the land itself, or Government officers, chiefly *chaudharis* and *kanungos,* in charge of collections. This view is also supported by three distinct facts: 1. The *kanungos* under the Marathas were in many case selected from among the best of *Makadams; 2.* The title of *kanungo* is retained to the present day by several of the *zamindars* of Odisha; 3. When we took the province in 1803, we could not get possession of a single revenue document of any importance…"[17]

The Marathas had very interactive relation with the *Garhjat* chiefs, which Mughals never cared to. The chiefs or what the ethnohistorians have constructed as the 'little kings'[18], lived in small forts surrounded by Jungles. They paid an irregular *peshkas* to the Raja of Nagpur.[19] The chiefs enjoyed their autonomy and paid light tributes to the Marathas and accepted the ovelordship of the Bhonsles of Nagpur. The Marathas maintained a big force of 2000 cavalry at Cuttack against possible rebellion of the Princely states.[20]

As regards civil administration, Sir William Wilson Hunter writes, "I have most carefully examined the records of this period, but I can detect absolutely no trace of anything like Civil Administration. The Maratha cavalry hurried the country as stated periods each year, and departed with the spoil. The village commune alone stands out above the stormy waste of waters, and their internal organization formed the only sort of Civil Government during the forty years which preceded our accession."[21] Each village had its semi-hereditary, semi-elective heads, who ruled the hamlet and represented it to the Maratha receiver. When extortions of the later passed all bounds, the village temporized till it could get his head-men out of his clutches and then the whole community decamped with its cattle into the jungle. Fixed property did not exist and the peasantry soon learnt the powerlessness of the cavalry amid morasses and forests. The few landholders who had houses worth burning belted them round with dense thickets of bamboos. A winding narrow passage afforded the sole means of approach and these jungles formed the secure fortifications against the invaders who would only fight on horseback. Such greenwood defenses survive to this day. "Once in the tributary states, being stuck by the close overgrown site of a chieftain's fort, an old man explained to me that the jungle had been planted to keep off the Maratha horse."[22]

latter?

It appears from some of observations of the British officials on the basis of reports as well as fieldworks including oral narratives etc., that the Marathas did not much penetrate deep into the administration of Odisha. Hence, there were no innovations. The last innovations including changes in the nomenclatures which had marked a shift from the native format were made by the Mughals when they took over from the Afghans.

The Mughal units were *sarkar* (dandapatta under the native rule) with Faujadar as the head, Pargana or Mahal (bhise under the native rule) with Chaudhury as the head, Taluk (khanda under the native rule) with taluqdar as the head, Mauza (village) headed by Maqaddam. The Bhoi of the grama was called the Quanugo. The head of the Garhjat was called Zamindar, the head of the Quilla was Quiladar.

Subhedar was the head of the Sarkar or province and later called Nazim. Next to him was Diwan. The Mughal made changes in their administrative units in Odisha from time to time as the needs arose.

The Marathas controlled the water resources including bunds and canals. The bunds were about 190 miles in length. The landed proprietors and the ryots were in the habit of paying *pulbandi abwabs*(extra impositions for embankment repairs) along with their *jumma* (assessed revenue) under the Maratha regime before 1803. The Maratha rulers also allowed deductions from the jumma for embankment repairs. Since 1803, the Company's Government undertook repair work at the expense of the proprietors; the minor repairs were entrusted to the Zamindar who were allowed deductions in the *jumma*.

Odisha under the Marathas as ceded by Alivardi Kahn in 1752, comprised an area of 8000 square miles and a seacoast extending over 200 miles from Pipli in Subarnarekha to Malud on the frontier of Ganjam consisting of two political divisions – *Garhjat* and *Mughalbandi*. Odisha was under the Maratha Rule from 1751- 1803. During this period nine governors (Subhedars) were in charge of Odisha stationed at Cuttack.

1. Mir Habib (1751- 1752)
2. Mirja Saleh (1752- 1759)
3. Sheo Bhatt Sathe (1760- 1764)
4. Bhabani Pandit (1764-1768)
5. Sambhaji Ganesh (1768- 1770)
6. Babuji Naik (1770- 1773)
7. Madhaji Hari (1773- 1777)
8. Rajaram Pandit (1778- 1793)
9. Sadashiv Rao (1793- 1803)

The governors (*subhedars*) played crucial role in Orissa for they were placed in a complex relation between the Bengal government on the one hand and the Raja of Nagpur on the other. As per the initial arrangement (treaty of 1751), the

Subhedar technically was under the Nawab of Bengal, but practically was controlled by the Maratha ruler of Nagpur. Thus he had to satisfy the Raja or Court of Nagpur. Nagpur Court expected regular payment and no disturbances. The Maratha government of Odisha had to deal with two domains simultaneously- the Mughalbandi and the Garhjat [23] . Mughalbandi was the coastal territory, which was earlier under the Mughals now acquired by the Marathas. The Marathas divided the Mughalbandi into four *chaklas* or division, 1) Cuttack, 2) Bhadrak, 3) Soro, 4) Balasore and about 150 *parganas*.[24] Each *pargana* was, as a rule, divided into one, two, three, or more of the following allotments or Mahals, viz,

1. Taluka Chaudhury
2. Taluka Kanungo Wlayati
3. Yaluka Kanungo
4. Taluka Sadar Kanungo
5. Taluka Majkuri or Mokdam Majkuri or simply Majkuri[25]

Perhaps *Chaudhari* and *kanungo*, were used as synonymous with that of Talukdar, and that the same responsibility was attached to both the names. In charge of each *chakla* was an officer called the *amil*, who was individually responsible to the state for revenue, assessed on his division and for the general conduct and supervision of revenue, civil, and criminal business. He was remunerated by grants of land called *nankar,* which he held rent-free and besides this he was allowed on adjustment of his accounts, certain perquisites and deductions on accounts of expenses of collection. He in turn was assisted by a *gomasta* or mofussil or wilayati kanungo in each *pargana.* Each *gomasta* had under him one or more *mohurrirs*. The former were generally persons of Bengali extraction; and the later were mostly pure Odias and on them the bulk of the work fell.[26] They kept the accounts on *tal* leaf, made measurements and furnished such detailed information as was called for by their superiors. The offices of the *sadar Kanungo* was abolished by Raja Ram Pandit, but that of *Gomasta* or *Wilayati Kanungo* was retained until the British acquisition of the province in 1803, when it was abolished. The *amils* did not as a rule make the makadams responsible for the collection of all lands within their *chakla*; a hustabud settlement was made yearly, and the amount of it was duly reported to the Government. The amil respected the hereditary rights of the *Mokadams* and gave them *nankar* lands, which they called their *pitrali* or patrimonial property. They also had charge of the collections due from all lands held *khas*.

The Marathas were not keen on taking up the detailed management. They were therefore willing to give to any person who would "engage for the payment of a lump sum". The

Makadams were perhaps best qualified for the purpose. The Marathas gradually got rid of the detailed management and engaged persons ready to pay (paid) lump sum. This led to the rise of *mokadams* since they were better qualified for the purpose and it soon became a practice for the *amils* to take engagements from them. This growing practice, led to the growing importance of *mokadams*. "It soon became a common practice for the *amils* to take engagements from them."[27] This was at the beginning of the 19th century and is contemporaneous with the word *zamindar* in Orissa. About the same time too mention is made of *Zamindars* being dispossessed (either by compulsory transfer of their lands or on the best terms they could get or being ousted without any compensation whatsoever.) for want of punctuality in the payment of revenue due from them. The original designation was given in official records to the holder of one or more entire *pargana*, and to the Rajas and *khandayats* of *killas;* but in common language, and in late *sanads*, the words *talukdars* and *zamindar* were used as synonymous, and applied indifferently to the *chaudhuries* and *kanungo talukdars*. During the confusion which ensued between 1801 and, the British acquisition of the province in 1803, it seems most probable, that the *chaudharies kanungos, makdams* and other persons entrusted with collection in estates held *khas* or who had given agreements to the *amils* to pay the lump sums due from other lands, assumed the title of *Zamindar* and claimed to hold the land itself in virtue of heredity right, valid or invalid, as the case may be, to collect its rents.

"All revenue reports of those times teem with accounts of the cruel, but often ingenious, processes by which the Maratha collectors slowly bled the people. Inconvenient precedents and institutions were course at once cleared away as mere clogs upon the process of extracting money. The carefully adopted organization of village and circle officers which the Mughals, whenever they had come, had, grafted on the old feudalism of Gondwana, with all its graduated structure of rights and duties, gave way to a system of public auction. Villages were put up to the highest bidder, but even he was lucky if he got to the end of a year safe."[28]

It appears that landholders under the Maratha rule had no proprietary rights in their estates. The legal heir could not obtain the estate without paying fine, which was not governed by any fixed principles. A fine was extracted from every transfer of property.

The gross collection of land revenue of Odisha of the last twelve years of the Maratha rule including that from the tributary states shows that the revenue of the last four years was higher than that of the preceding years rising up to15,00,000 rupees of sorts.[29] If last twelve years gross collection is taken it would amount to 13,90,000 rupees. [30] The Maratha gross *Jamabandi* included various allowances in money or in land to the revenue officers, together with other expenses of collection and authorized deduction; the expenses were such that generally there remained a surplus of about four lakhs to be annually dispatched to the court of Nagpur.[31]

Besides land revenue, the pilgrim tax was an added income of the Marathas. The amount of collection annually made from the pilgrims ranged between 2 to 5 lakhs of rupees.[32] According Orme, the whole revenue amounted from 20 to 25 lakhs of rupees.[33]

The Maratha government was engaged in public works such as construction and repair of embankments for the irrigation and flood control. An embankment on Subarnarekha helped the people considerably. There have been mentions of Marathas attending on improvement of roads and ferries across rives or water bodies. For support of ferries on Mahanadi and Kathajodi rivers the Marathas granted *Jagirs.* The transport of troops and public and goods were facilitated through this process.

The Marathas renovated the famous Jagannath road for purposes of pilgrimage and provided security and sarais. The Marathas encouraged Pilgrimage to Puri and made huge income while supporting a cultural and religious domain in Odisha and the economy involved in it.

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Some of the manufacturing and trading activities of pre-Maratha period were on the decline during the Maratha period. The weaving industries of Hariharpur, Balasore and Soro appreciated abroad, the calicoes of Balasore and Soro appreciated by foreign merchants, particularly from France and England, declined during the period thanks to the decline of the English, Dutch and Danish factories. Yet the weavers continued to trade and Marathas collected tax on these items.

Cheap paddy was supplied to Bengal and Madras through Golrah, Harispur, Bisenpur and Manikpatna at Chilka. Odisha had a brisk salt trade. The amount of salt exported to Berar was three lakh mounds per annum. From a statement by Rajaram Pandit, the Maratha Governor of Odisha, it is evident that the income of the Maratha government from the salt sold to Bengal amounted to two lakh rupees per annum. Salt provided a good income to the Maratha state.[34]

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Merchants of Berar and Hindusthan brought cotton and other goods to Cuttack and while returning they carried loads of salt manufactured at Chilka. The duty upon salt, exported from this region into the Western regions in India alone amounted to Rs. 4,500 in *Kauris*. To form an idea of the total of the income of the state, Forster's account may be taken. According to him, Cuttack produced 17 lakhs of rupees out of which 7 lakhs were deducted for military expenses at Cuttack and the rest was sent to Nagpur treasury.[35] According to Lekie, Rajaram, the Maratha Governor of Odisha, pays the raja of Nagpur 10 lakhs of rupees out of the collection estimated at 22 lakh including what is sent from Balasore. As per Orme's assessment the whole revenue of the country amounted between 20 lakhs and 25 lakhs of rupees.[36]

According to the standard Mughal assessment, the territory ceded by the Alivardi Khan to the Marathas yielded Rs. 25,73, 588/-.[37] The figure is much higher than the one put for the Maratha revenue collection which is put at Sicca rupees 21,20,481/ for the year 1768-69.[38] Expenses out of the revenue for the year as given by Firmniger:[39]

i) Horse maintained for general national defence - Rs. 8,02,201/-

ii) House-hold troops and servants – Rs. 2, 28, 972/-

iii)	Artillery and Garrisons -	Rs. 1,64, 953/-
iv)	Khelat at Pooneah and occasional presents to more independent zamindars -	Rs. 1,64, 953/-
v)	Treasure remitted as surplus amount to Nagpur –	Rs. 4, 37,808/-
vi)	Taqavi -	Rs. 1,74,329/-
	Total -	Rs. 21,80,705/-

There are other sources which provide different figures of revenue collection in Odisha under the Marathas :[40]

1.	Forrestor's Account -	Rs. 17,00,000/-
2.	Rennel, Memoir of a Map of Hindustan -	Rs. 24, 00,000
3.	Blunt's Narrative -	Rs. 17,00,000/-
4.	Lickie's Accounts's -	Rs. 22,00,000/-
5.	Stirling -	Rs. 18,50,000/
6.	Trower, Collector of Cuttack, 1818 -	Rs. 13,50,78,000/

As observed by De, Trower's figures appear to be most reliable since they were taken from the Maratha revenue records made over by the Maratha revenue officials to the British authorities after their conquest of Odisha.[41]

The Maratha presence in Odisha may be divided into two phases: the first phase covered the period between 1741-42 and 1751 during which Odisha was witness to the fury of battles between the forces of the Alivardy Khan and of the Mararhas under Bhonsales; and the second phase commenced from 1751 when Alivardi Khan ceded Odisha to the Marathas and continued to 1803 with the cessation of Maratha rule in Odisha by the treaty of Deogaon (1803). Whereas the first phase was a witness to extremely harsh conditions in Odisha particularly in the areas from Cuttack to Balasore, the second phase saw relative peace as the Marathas settled to administration. It may be surmised from reliable Maratha revenue records that the Maratha revenue administration was lenient which if presented in terms of revenue figures would show that the Maratha net average collection of revenue amounted to approximately Rs. 11 lacks, as per the figures provided by Trower, an average of 12 years from 1790-91 to 1801-02 based upon the Maratha records received from the Maratha Sadr Qanungo and the record keeper.[42]

The Maratha government spent on charity granting rent free lands. It "abolished sair duties for which it suffered an annual loss of Rs. 20,000/- in addition to the collection expenses granted to *Zamindars* varying between Rs. 5000/- to Rs.9000/- each year."[43]

The Mughal and Maratha administrations were equally elaborate. Land revenue was the primary source of income. At the same time there were other sources of income too which comprised a number of cesses, duties and awabs. Most of the non-land based income came from such towns as Cuttack, Puri and Balasore, including pilgrim tax on ‘graduated scale from richer to the middle strata’. [44] The other sources of revenue consisted of Octroi and transit duties on merchandise, Sales tax and ferry actions, collection of duties from *hats* and *bazaars*, issue of dastaks (license for duty-free trade) while also making profits from the monopoly of trade in salt and grain, two very important products and trade items of Odisha during the period.[45] The Maratha rigor of taxation and the firmness of its collection “sent to Nagpur, added with repatriation to Nagpur state by Maratha Officials and the traders, constituted a big drain of capital from Orissa to Nagpur.”[46]

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As discussed earlier in the chapter, the Maratha revenue system was mostly based on bidding (farming) system. Appointment of officials like *Subhedar*, *Quiladar,* and *Fauzdars* often depended on their capacity to maximize collection. Economic distress caused by famine, cyclone, flood, pestilence led to more fleecing from peasants and traders by the local chieftains and *zamindars*. There are any number of reports on loots by Afghan and *bargi* free-booters.

Various reports and some recent researches project some positive side of the Maratha rule or administration in Odisha. The Maratha revenue system was "based upon age old custom" wherein Marathas made no major innovation. Compared to the preceding Mughal Period and the succeeding English period, the Maratha period was relatively peaceful, which conduced growth of trade and commerce. Marathas did not face agrarian discontent or resistance movement during the period which one sees during the British period on a large scale. Neither do we come across large scale tyranny of the revenue assessors and collectors.

The Maratha administrative focus has two areas of operation as far as its interests and operations were concerned- a focus on the core area and a focus or an absence of it in the peripheral areas. Cuttack, Puri and Balasore constituted the core area in the administrative scheme of the Marathas. The core areas witnessed better socio-economic conditions and the periphery experienced Maratha raids involving collection of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi, compounded often by roving bands.

Cuttack flourished as an emporium of trade and became a central market for exchange between the Maratha Nagpur, English Bengal and the Northern *sarkar* of Madras presidency.[47] Merchants from Berar arrived here with cotton for sale. The period was especially golden for the Gosain and the Giri merchants who accumulated huge capital through lucrative trade in grains, textiles, salt and other forest products of Odisha.[48] Cuttack which was the capital of Odisha was also the military and commercial centre. During the Maratha period, Cuttack experienced commercial expansion. Chauliagunj in Cuttack, become a wholesale market place for salt and rice apart from being a military camp and centre of cottage industry with salt and rice *golas* (go downs) established here.[49] The Marathas supported the silver filigree work here. The brass and bell metal crafts also flourished. Though the urban town of Cuttack showed this kind of growth, it still was way short of its potential. The growth did took place but within the limitations of a feudal structure and inhibited growth of roads and communication, technology and energy sources. The sources of power were animals such as bullocks, horses, elephants and human beings. It has been suggested that Cuttack during the period of the Marathas had a "nascent growth of capitalist economy that was chopped off by the British regime subsequently".[50] The wealth produced here was shared among the elite that comprised of Maratha officials and their associates in land revenues matters, the traders and merchants such as Gosain, Berari, Marwari, Gujarati and Giri etc.

During this period Balasore emerged as the primary centre of trade and commerce. Foreign traders and merchants visited Balasore. It was an important centre of textiles industry and market for several commodities bought and sold. Goods sold at Balasore cost 60% higher than in Cuttack. The decline of Balasore in course of time has been attributed to the rise of Calcutta under the English.

The urban places in Odisha during the places, more particularly, "the Maratha Cuttack was a representative oriental pre-colonial town primarily directed towards politico-administrative and strategic functions as the provincial headquarters of Maratha territory in Odisha.[51]

The rural and urban masses led a very simple and practical way of life. Their condition did not worsen compared to the previous Mughal period and the succeeding British. The prices of the commodities were cheap. A seer of rice was sold for 15 *gandas*[52] of *kauris* or about 70 seers to a rupee compared to 65 seers a rupee in 1805. "In standards of life Cuttack and Puri fared better than the countryside during the Maratha period. In fact, the economic distress of Odisha in the Maratha period was created more by the British blockade of trade of Orissa, in order to force the Marathas to cede Orissa; than by the Maratha depredations as alleged."[53]

The urban centres showed a great of demographic resilience. With expansion and commercial activities the urban centres as for example experience of influx of new elements from outside. Berari, Bengali and English merchants arrived here and conducted their business. Some them settled permanently which added to the richness of texture of the urban places, such as Cuttack and Balasore.

The Maratha catholicity in religion led to huge growth of temples, religious paces, monasteries, cults, arrangements for *bhog,* food material for *sebayats* and ‘gudi’(worship) allowances.

The Maratha rule in Odisha from 1751- 1803, was a period of both turmoil and stability. As far as the political structure was concerned they inserted themselves into the Mughal domain which they did elsewhere and the native princes called *Garjats* were allowed autonomy within the Mughal suzerainty. In revenue matters also the Marathas made no major innovation or structural changes. Transport infrastructure though within a feudal structure, urban structure and pilgrimage were boosted and supported. The Marathas paid attention to all public works and made income in all areas. Trade and commerce including ports appear to have declined. The reason for this was the English policies and rise of Calcutta, acquisition of Bengal and northern *sarkars* by the British. However, the dominant aspect in all this is the Marathas as a pre-modern state are more in the context of a late medieval structure which is more a post-Mughal than truly a pre-modern state in a comparative framework.

In the face of a variety of contrasting views about the Maratha rule in Odisha emanating from a variety provenances, such as the British officials and administrators, historians and other writers, the travelers, eye-witness accounts and novelists etc, it is hard to make a proper assessment of the nature of the Maratha presence or rule in Odisha. Sir William Hunter's reference to the Maratha rule as "fifty years of nightmare", Motte, a traveler's observation that a place that was once "considerable" was "depopulated by the Marathas"[54] cannot be taken on their face value without discrimination and judgment.

Odisha perhaps was never central to the Bhonsles. "It did not yield revenue easily and its administration was largely subcontracted to the Maratha contractors Gosain merchants."[55] And yet Marathas were seen to have made considerable changes in the core areas though as has been highlighted in the chapter, they largely benefitted from it. At the same time as the figures and narratives suggest the Maratha period was certainly better period in many respects compared to its immediate predecessor and successor.

Notes and References

[1] It has been suggested by historical researches, though inadequate to make an authoritative statement that the *Garhjat* chiefs in Odisha preferred to remain isolated from the others insulated by forests and mountains and never developed communication systems. There was very little military innovation or even market development in these regions.

[2] Andrew Stirling, *Orissa, its Geography, Statistics, History, Religion and Antiquities*, Revised Edition, Prafulla, Jagatsinghpur, 2004.

[3] Pradeep Kumar Gan, Contribution of Europeans to Orissan Historiography, *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, XLVII, No. 2, Bhubaneswar, pp. 122- 124, p. 122.

[4] Andrew Stirling, op. cit., p.9.

[5] Ibid., p. 12.

[6] Ibid., p. 14.

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[7] J. K. Sahu, *Historical Geography of Odisha*, Decent Books, New Delhi, 1997, p. 262.

[8] Dr. Brundaban Mishra, 'Agrarian System of Orissa Under the Mughal Rule', *Orissa Historical Research Journal,* Vol. 1 and 2, Superintendent of Museum, Bhubaneswar, 1952, p. 158.

[9] *Mughalbandi*, a term originally used to denote the lands set apart for the revenue of the reigning power, but which subsequently came to mean a territory assessed in detail and paying revenue to the Government , as distinguished from that which paid a fixed lump sum as tribute, known as tributary state. See G. Toynbee, *A Sketch of the History of Orissa from 1803- 1828*, Prfulal, Kolakata, 2005, p. 15.

[10] B.C. Ray, 'Maratha Policy in Orissa', in A. G. Pawar (ed.), *Marartha History Seminar*, Shivaji University Kohlapur, 1971, pp. 307- 315,p. 308.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., p. 310.

[13] Foster, 'Nagpur in 1788 (Foster' Account of Nagpur in 1788)', in C. U. Wills (ed.), *British Relations with the Nagpur State in the Eighteenth Century, Nagpur: An Account mainly based upon Contemporary English Records1926,* pp. 84-103, p. 98.

[14] The event has been narrated by Brajanath Badjena by an eyewitness account in poetic form. See, Brajanth Badjena *Samar Tarang* (edited by Dr. Debendra Mohanty), Bidya Prakshan, Cuttack, 2004. During my fieldwork to this region I discovered that the event continues to be part of the local collective memory in the region which articulates itself, through the institutionalization of it in the form of annual celebration of this event of 1781 as 'independence day.'

[15] Cited in B. C. Ray, op. cit., p. 314.

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[16] Sushil Chandra Dey (ed.), *Guide to Orissan Records, Vol. V*, Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar, 1965, p. 32.

[17] G. Toynbee, *A Sketch of the History of Orissa, from 1803- 1828*, Prafula, Kolakata,, 2005, p. 39- 40.

[18] See Burkhard, Schnepel, *The Jungle Kings, Ethnohistorical Aspects of Politics and Ritual in Orissa*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2002.

[19] Andre wink, *Lnad and Sovereignty in India*, The Eighteenth Century Agrarian politics under the Maratha Swarajya, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 112.

[20] Jadunath Sarkar*,* *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1932, p. 44.

[21] W. W. Hunter, 'Orissa Under Foreign Governors, Mughal and Marhatta, 1568-1803)', in N. K. Sahu (ed.) *A History of Orissa*, New Age Publication, Cuttack, 2005, pp. 182-208, p. 207.

[22] Ibid.

[23] The Garhjat or tributary states were- Khurda, Banki, Kujang, Ali, Kanika, Nikhuria, Daspalla, Khandapara, Narasinghapur, Dhenakanal, Ranpur, Bunagar, Talcher, Baramba, Mayurbhanaj, Nilgiri, Angul, Hindol, Athgarh, Marichpur, Bishenpur, Keonjhar, Patia (Bengal Secret and Political Consultations, 1 March 1804, No. 42 A).

[24] G. Toynbee, *A Sketch of the History of Orissa from 1803 to1828*, Prafulla, Kolkata, 2005, p. 38.

[25] Ibid, p. 38.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Toynbee, op. cit., p. 39.

[28] Ibid., p. 41.

[29] Boards' Collections, Vol. 586, No. 14, 189, p. 300

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[30] Ibid., pp. 132-3

[31] About Arcot Rs. 15, 00, 000- Roy, New Lights…p. 210.

[32] Roy, *New Lights on Maratha Orissa, Punthis Pustak, Calcutta,* 1993, p. 212

[33] *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Imperial Records Department, Calcutta, Vol. V, No, 2, 069, nd.

[34] B. C. Ray, *New Lights*…op.cit, p. 212.

[35] Cited in B. C Ray, op.cit., p.213.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Sushil Chandra Dey (ed.), *Guide to Orissan Records, Vol. V*, op. cit., p. 32.

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., p. 32.
[40] Ibid., p. 33.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., P. 35.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Dr. Pramod Mohanty, 'State and Urban Society in Orissa during the Maratha Rule', Nihar ranjan Patnaik (ed.), *Exploring Orissan History*, Kitab Mahal, Cuttack, 2005, p. 250.

[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid., p. 251.
[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., p. 252.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., p. 253.

[52] *Ganda* is a measure in set of four and *Seer*, old measure of quantity less than a kilogram.

[53] Ibid.

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[54] T. Mote, *Narrative of a Journey to the Diamond Mines at Sambalpur* , Asiatic Annual Register, J. Debrett Picciadilly, London, 1799.

[55] P. J. Marshal, *Bengal, the British Bridgehead, Eastern India 1740-1828*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1987 p. 74.

Chapter V

The Maratha Role in the Cultural Domain in Orissa

With the hindsight of history, the symbiosis of politics and culture and their interconstitutiveness have significance, thus can be hardly ignored. The historical actors or agencies have acted ideologically, made their choices that have been historically and culturally shaped and actors have played their role of contributing to the development of culture, ideology, symbols, idioms and sign language, transformed from coercion to consent and seen retrospectively as organic and 'hegemonic'. '*Segmentary*' state formation model as applied by South Hall in Africa and Burton Stein to South India and Herman Kulke in Odisha, with its conceptual structure such as the 'ritual sovereignty' and ritual negotiation etc. is one such recently applied framework of Political anthropology or cultural framework for historical analysis.[1] Bernard Cohn has made cultural analysis of the emergence of British 'hegemonic' power or the British attempt at inserting themselves into the Mughal hegemonic culture through use of Mughal idioms, semiotics, symbols etc.[2] There are instances from the history of India where the king has played significant role in the socio-cultural domain and maintenance of ideological elaboration. There are instances where kings or the political actors integrated communities by blending them culturally or having patronized such a blend that has resulted in the political symbiosis and dissolution of conflict.

The eighteenth century is a world of cultural complexity with several forces representing different worlds and experiences, in India in particular. With the fall of the Mughal power and disintegration of their empire, the Indian world appeared to be multiple, not just politically or geographically, but culturally too. Historians have tried to bring out the cultural aspects of the eighteenth century at different political sites.

What, however, looks distinctively characteristic of the century is the context of culture. Culturally, this century is seen as a culmination of the indigenous processes in Sanskrit, Persian and a host of local or regional traditions. And at the same time, it is seen as a century of transition from local and indigenous to what would appear to be colonial and global thus heralding a break[3] with traditions of its own. The complex processes at work make the century relevant and demanding as a potentially significant research domain. In order to recapture the mental or cultural alongside political in their reciprocation, the century is seen to offer two broad perspectives. One is the pan-Indian perspective that situates the Mughals as an imperial formation of subcontinental magnitude. The other is the regional with its focus on an historically evolved cultural framework generating an integrative system of several subregional structures or formations in one single culturally mediated harmonious system shaped by certain forms of reciprocation within a space definable as cultural as in case of south India and sometimes by a dominant religious cult perceived as a regional religion with its deity as regional or state deity and culture as regional culture as in case of Odisha.[4] The first, associated with the Mughals, assumes that the Mughlas evolved a culture that was internalized by the Indians and remained ingrained or embedded in the political structure having thus produced politically significant symbolic value and order. An observation put as a postulate about the century is that the century represented a dynamic process at work more than it represented a decline. Marathas were in the forefront of those 'who preserved the political and ideological leverage of the universal empire of the Mughals'. Recent scholarship has tried show that the British inserted themselves into the Mughal system in the early stage of their conquest. The paradigm of 'sultanism' of the early British insertion into the Indian subcontinent was of great significance in so far as the significance of the Mughal politico-economic culture persisted.[5] Bernard Cohn, using anthropological models has clearly shown how the British in their early colonial phase derived consent of the natives by using an already existing legitimate politico-cultural framework of the natives. The British used the Mughal *Darbar* and similar public symbols in order to effectively and symbolically communicate that they were not different from the Mughlas and that they were the inheritors of the Mughal culture or more succinctly, were "heir" to the Mughals.[6] The British in the post-mutiny period, Cohn argues, had clearly recognized the importance of the cultural domain created and inhabited by the Mughals, which they (British) used as symbols. The use of *durbars* (and its entire Mughal paraphernalia), titles, privileges, idioms etc was an attempt by the British, as Cohn views, to create a cultural camouflage for the continuity and strength of their rule despite the fact that the British had proved their military superiority or supremacy unambiguously in India by this time. The British negotiation with India's politico-cultural past which was the Mughal past, grounds the importance of the cultural domain and its importance in the political processes and more specifically the situatedness of the Mughals in India. For the British at the time of their takeover or for the period of political transition in which culture seemed to have played an important role, the Mughal past seemed to be a key usable past.

The second perspective locates regional polity as a conglomerate of (or a series of) sub-regional formations historically integrated regionally by forces from within into viable regional system alongside a regional polity often around a cult as in Odisha by seventeenth and eighteenth century. This regional system and its cultural integration were represented as much as buttressed by the rise of a regional deity and a regional power simultaneously, perhaps consequent upon each other. This produced a regional politico-cultural framework that existed alongside the Mughal system or polity and sometimes, negotiated with it. While the Mughal political or politico-cultural domain persisted over the subcontinent and shaped or negotiated political relations within the subcontinents within the existing framework, this domain of culture played key role in its respective domains. This may thus be seen as the other side of the eighteenth century formations. These politico-cultural formations are found at the regional and sub-regional levels and are constituted historically by forces from within the region. Three works may be cited here for the purpose of illustration, concerned with three different regions: South (Chola Kingdom)[7], Rajasthan[8] and in Odisha[9].

The idea of regional formation based upon sub-regional polities or entities gradually being merged into a regional formation or polity are applicable to the eighteenth century Odisha. In the context of the present study particularly under this chapter, three elements concerning the eighteenth century are being looked into- the regional formation with its multiple centers (sub-regional centers) historically i.e., the Garhjats, the cult of Jagannath and increasing importance of the ‘sacred space’ or pilgrimage center of Puri and the Maratha insertion within this domain.

From early times the historical geography of Odisha comprised a range of vast territory from the mouth of the Ganges to the Godavari and from the Bay of Bengal to Amarknataka (of the Vindya range). Though it was divided from time to time into several political units like Kalinga, Kosala, Utkal, Odra, Tosali etc., it retained a cultural affinity throughout the ages.[10] Under the rule of the Imperial Gangas and the Gajapatis, i.e., for more than four hundred years from the early twelfth century to AD 1568, it constituted a single State.

Geographical factors have played key role in shaping Orissa. The lower levels of the coast and the river valleys and the estuaries, hinterland defined by a mountain range, Eastern Ghats, running parallel to the coast at a distance of twenty to fifty kilometers and the plains covered with woods and marshes constitute the broad geographical shape of Orissa. The geographical situations never allowed even the most powerful kingdoms of the hinterland, which were easily defended by using guerrilla tactics, totally or permanently under their control, even when they lay near the centre. There existed a great deal of ideological bond between the different historical centers of power in the plains with the kingdoms of hinterland outside the military and direct politico-administrative control by the former over the later. The process of indoctrination of the predominantly tribal inhabitants with Hindu ideology concerning the legitimacy of their rule assumed significance in this context.

One important feature in the historical geography of medieval Orissa is the rise of a number of Mandala States ruled by feudatory chiefs with their internal autonomy under sovereign rulers. (Earliest among them was the Kongoda Mandala of the Sailodbhabas.) The Mandal States were mostly located on the borders of two sovereign and rival states and they were used by military bases by the overlord against the enemy power. In ninth-tenth centuries most of the Mandal States were under the Bhauma rulers of Tosali who were at that time on war with Somavamsis and the decline of Bhaumas. The history and geographical extent of these Mandal states were greatly affected by the aggressive imperialism of the Somavamsis and the decline of the Bhaumas. The Mandal states proved to be the nuclei of the feudatory States, which raised their heads during the rule of the Gangas and the Gajapatis.[11]

From the 8th to the 10th centuries C.E. Odisha was ruled by Bhaumakara dynasty. They were followed by the Somas and the Kesharies. The famous Lingaraj temple was built by Yajati Keshari and completed by his successors. By the end of the 12th century AD Anagabhima Chodagangadeva (1078- 1191) of the Gnaga dynasty ruled over the region extending from Kalinganagar in Paralakhemundi to Cuttack. Vaishanavism received royal patronage and Vaishanva temples were built at Mukhilingam, Shrikurmam, Simachalam and Puri. Anangabhimadeva completed the temple at Puri. In the 13th century Orissan architecture reached its Zenith with the construction of the Sun temple of Konark by Narasimhadeva I (1238- 1264). The first Surya King Gajapati Kapilendra deva (1435- 1466) defeated the Muslim ruler of Bengal, the Hindu ruler of Vijayanagara and Kanchi and the Bahamani Sultan. His empire extended from the river Ganga in the north to Kavery in the south. Mukunda dev was the last independent king of Orissa. He was killed in 1568 while fighting the Afghans of Bengal, which led to the destruction of the Gajapati Kingdom and the Jagannath cult at Puri by the Afghan Sultanate of Bengal.

Ramachandra succeeded in establishing a local princedom in restoring the Jagannath cult at Puri (1587). After the Mughal conquest of Orissa two years later Ramchandra was acknowledged by Akbar and his general Mansingh as the local successor to the Gajapati and was invested with nearly two dozens small chieftains and principalities in the hinterland of Mughal territory or *Mughalbandi* in coastal Orissa. The Mughals ruled Orissa for a little over a century.

The rise of the regional power in the form of Odishan monarchy perhaps evolved alongside the rise of a powerful state that incorporated subordination of a number of states or feudatories. The rise of the Gajapati monarchy of Odisah as Odishan (regional) state (and monarchy) can be located in a long historical trajectory in which the gradual rise and expansion of its power was a consequence simultaneously of its military victories and economic, social and cultural forces. The most complex and determining, the domain of culture, saw the rise of the Jagannath cult on the one hand the ritual authority of the Gajapati Raja on the other, which played an integrative role in the process. One of the significant aspects of this integration was the relation between the Gajapati Raja and the feudatories (or what has been called) the *Garahjat* the process of which may be briefly proposed.

Prior to the Ganga expansion into Odisha in the eleventh century, there were a number of small kingdoms and principalities scattered over the region, which Kulke has termed nuclear areas of sub-regional power.[12] The Matharas, Vaisishthas and Pitribhakas of the southern Kalinga region (Srikakulam and northern Visakhapatnam districts) donated numerous rent-free lands for the establishment of Brahmanical settlements in the fifth and sixth centuries AD.[13] Similar grants are also recorded for the Nalas of the Jeypore-Bastar region in the sixth century and the Sailodbhabas of the Banpur-Parikud region in the seventh and eighth centuries, among others.[14] A political dynamism involving the chieftains' authority over the cultivating hierarchy, particularly through the deployment of Brahmanical influence over the populace had already been initiated at a local level. By the sixth century, rulers of Sonepur, the Tastikaras had strengthened their legitimacy by patronizing autochthonous deities like Maninageswari of Ranpur and Stambheswari. In many cases, like that of the Pulindas and the Sailas, the tribal origin of the dynasties illustrates the ethnic as well as social and political involvement of tribal groups into a predominantly Hindu cultural mainstream. Later, these *Samantas* or feudatories further consolidated their control over local traditions and cultures under the overarching authority of the Gangas and the Gajapatis. Thus, core areas of political and ritual authority projected a particular image of kingship over their hinterlands, which later contributed to the formation of a pan- regional state with a syncretic cult at its core.[15]

If these territorial units are construed as *nuclear areas of sub-regional power* as has been done by Stein (in case of South India) and Kulke in case of Odisha, it could be argued that in the later period these 'sub-regional powers became the homelands of the royal dynasties of the future regional kingdoms. In Odisha, nuclear areas were an integral part of a continuous process of political development and more, centers of integration of tribal element than of their "sustained displacement".[16] The most important among the nuclear areas of sub-regional power in Odisha were those territories which were either situated in upper delta regions of various rivers flowing into the Bay of Bengal or upstream in the valleys, especially of the Mahanadi river.

The (riverine) nuclear areas in Odisha were under the direct rule of the Hindu rajas, who were either independent or were temporarily subjugated by outside rulers. These "little kings" organized their sub-regional power according to the law books (*sastras*).[17] In its centre was the Hindu raja with his court. The centre of the nuclear area was encircled by a number of tax-free *agrahara* or *sasana* (brahmanical settlement) villages donated by the raja to Brahmins who had formed the elite of the administrative and ritual functionaries. These Brahmins of the court circle together with those Brahmins, who had been settled in the outer areas, had a tremendous influence upon the "inner colonization" of the nuclear areas and the maintenance of (Hindu) law and (royal) order.[18] Most of the autochthonous tutelary deities of Odisha underwent a process of Hinduization, the intensity and direction of which usually was directly influenced by the parallel rise of the sub-regional political authority from tribal chieftainship to Hindu kingship.[19] In course of time the cult of the tutelary deities at their place of origin was raised to the level of a fully developed temple cult whose ritual was nearly completely Hinduized.[20] The two most visible aspects of the cult- the uniconical symbol of the deity and its priests- seem to have served as the ritual bridge between the Hindu *rajas* and the people who worshipped the tutelary deity as their own deity.[21] This was accompanied by two processes of integration of the tribal and the Hindu society: inclusion of tribals into the system and "Kshetriyazation" of the tribals i.e., inclusion into militia. The dyad deeply influenced Hinduism and the means of legitimation of Hindu royal power in the partially Hinduized areas. The inclusion of tribal groups into the Hindu caste system initiated, on the village level, a process of Hinduization of their deities. Royal patronage of autochthonous deities seems to have been an essential presupposition for the consolidation of political power and its legitimation in the Hindu-tribal zone of Orissa.[22] Whether the Hinduized chiefs or the Hindu rajas had ascended from the local tribes or whether they had entered the respective areas as roaming free booters, most of them accepted the dominant autochthonous deities of their territories as family and tutelary deities of their principalities.[23]

Rise of the Gajapati Monarchy:

Odisha had a large number of "little kingdoms" for most part of its history, which were spread both in the plains and the hills. By the first millennium BC small isolated principalities were visible.[24] By this time the most important "nuclear areas" of Orissa, which formed the starting point of "early kingdoms", were to be found in the valleys and estuaries of the rivers Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani, which flowed through west and central Orissa. Up to the eighth century, the area known at that time was Tosali and located in the common delta of these rivers was divided by the Mahanadi into two nuclear areas of North and South Tosali. Up river, in the middle section, lay the smaller nuclear areas of Khinjali Mandala and Khijjingakotta, ruled by members of the Bhanaja dynsty. Further West, in the present-day Sambalpur –Sonpur region, then known as South

Kosala, lay the hereditary land of the Somavamsa dynasty. South of the Mahanadi delta, in present day Gnajam district, on the estuary of river Rusikulya river, was another nuclear area called Kangoda, the hereditary land of Shailodbhaba dynasty. Till further south, on the estuaries of the Vamsadhara and Nagavali rivers (in the present day of Sikakulam District of north Andhra Pradesh) was the original nuclear area of the Gangas, known as Kalinga.

As regards the unification of these principalities into 'early kingdoms' and 'imperial kingdoms', the Shailodbha dynasty was first able to bring two of these nuclear areas together as a subregional kingdom when it conquered South Toshali early in the seventh century and united it with Kongada. In the first half of the ninth century, Bhauma Karas of North Toshali conquered the nuclear area of South Toshali and Kongoda, thus bringing together the three nuclear areas of the region that occupied the greater part of the Orissan coast. In the early tenth century the Somavamshis of South Koshala succeeded in extending their hereditary lands in the West of Orissa up-river into the smaller nuclear areas of middle Mahanadi and linking them with the subregional kingdom on the coast. Thus, the first regional kingdom in Orissa was founded. At the beginning of the twelfth century the Gangas finally united their hereditary land of Kalinga with the subregional parts of south, central and west Orissa (in the meantime Somavamasha rule had collapsed) and thus founded their own imperial kingdom.

Kulke describes this unification of the various nuclear areas of Orissa into large kingdoms as "feudalism from below", a phrase coined by Kosambi (1956). As regards the different supra-local kingdoms, we are faced with "polycentric kingdoms" arising through the stepwise, concentric unification of several smaller units (unite like the processes envisaged in Kulke's "processual" model), and not through the fragmentation of a formerly larger unit (as the feudalism model). In addition, Kulke stresses that in Orissa the development of local kingdoms into subregional kingdoms and into the imperial kingdom of the Gnagas, like the earlier rise and consolidation of local principalities themselves, was characterized by the integration rather than expulsion or extinction of the tribal population, even though the conflict between the Hindu *rajas* constantly increasing need to expand on the one hand and the hereditary land rights of the original inhabitants on the other never quite came to an end. Kulke also emphasizes the role of the Brahman priests in "internal colonization", who were settled in the region by means of land grants, in the administration of the newly established dominions.

Jagannath and the Gajapatis:

The historical development of Jagannath's royal patronage, according to Kulke aimed at promoting internal as well as external legitimacy. Kingship and cult interconstituted and negotiated with each other. IN other words, they symbolized each other. This provided the main source of royal legitimation. In the twelfth century the Ganga king Chodaganga (1078-1152) conquered the fertile Mahanadi delta. In order to consolidate his rule in central Odisha Chodaganga transferred the administrative centre of his extended kingdom from Kaliganagara in the South to Cuttack in central Odisha. Chodaganga, personally a worshipper of Shiva, began to support the "autochthonous" god of Puri, who enjoyed regional significance. For this Vaishanvite deity, then already honourded in the form of wooden effigy, he had built the temple of Puri. These ritual measures, through which the Puri deity was raised to the status of a state deity (*rashtradevata*) decisively promoted the ideological and administrative unification of the different nuclear areas and the "little kingdoms" of the region. Since the Puri temple was one of the highest of this time, in building it Chodaganga was also making a claim to the status of the highest of Hindu Maharaja in the macro-region of the period.

The rule of Anangabhim III (1211- 1238) provides further evidence of the intensification of the relationship between king and the cult.

The cult of the god itself developed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in such a way that important Tantric, Shaktic, Buddhist and Saivaite deities, with their patrons and worshipers, were incorporated into the tribal Vaishnavaite cult in Puri. Along with the increasing power of the Gajapatis, the political connotations of the name 'Jagannath or 'Lord of the World' replaced the earlier philosophical- religious title 'Purushottam' or Highest Being'. In this period, Jagannath also acquired a reputation as the ninth incarnation (*avatar*) of Vishnu and Puri developed into one of the most important pilgrimage centers in India. The wealth, reputation and legitimacy of Jagannath's earthly deputies who appeared in spectacular roles at the yearly temple festivals, grew simultaneously with the splendour and greatness of the royal god.

The year 1434 marked the end of Ganga rule over Odisha. Because the new Gajapati Kapilendra Deo (1434-1465) was initially no more than a usurper of doubtful family origins and other rajas in the region were very hostile to his rule, he required another kind of ritual legitimacy. While Kapilendra's predecessors merely counted as the god's "deputies", he proclaimed that he had been chosen by Jagannath personally. All hostile actions against Kapilendra could therefore be represented as direct attacks (*droha*) on the god himself, while Kapilendra's own actions appeared to have divine sanction. In a further ideological development, the Gajapati was now described as the god's 'first servant' (*adya sevaka*). Ritually, this kind of ideology was expressed in a rite within the car festival (*ratha yatra*) which takes place every year in June/ July, in which the Gajapati sweeps the platform of the car at the feet of Jagannath's effigy with a golden broom. This sweeping rite, known as *Chera pahara,* in which the Gajapati expresses not only his devotion (*bhakti*) and his special relationship with the deity in front of tens of thousands of pilgrims, became the central rite of the car festival.

The dominant ritual position of the Khurda *rajas* among the tributary chiefs of Odisha was based on their renewal and control of Jagannath cult at Puri. In the mid-seventeenth century a Mughal governor of Odisha reported to his imperial master Aurangzeb that 'all the other zamindars of the country worship him (the Raja of Khurda) like a god and disobedience of his orders they regard as a great sin.'[25] Their political position, however, was constantly threatened by the Mughal governors of Odisha, who invaded Khurda and Puri several times in their attempt to annex Khurda and control Puri's lucrative pilgrimage economy. Until 1751, when the Mughal governors and their Nawabs of Bengal were ousted from Odisha by the Marathas, Jagannatha and his earthly deputies, the Gajapatis of Khurda, had to take refuge in various places in South Odisha several times. Under the Hindu Marathas, Khurda raja's position became even more precarious. In order to subvert Khurda's dominant role among the rajas of central Odisha, the Marathas brought most of them under the control of their governors at Cuttack. They even tried to appropriate the ritual role of Khurda's rajas in the Jagannath cult through the performance of famous 'sweeping ceremony' (*Chera Pahara)*, i.e., the sweeping of Jagannath's chariot during the *Ratha yatra*, the most important royal prerogative of the Khurda kings.[26]

During the period of the Gajapatis of imperial Gangas and Suryavamsa, the Jagannath cult was confined to the political and religious centers of their empire- Cuttack and Puri and they used to threaten their political opponents with the wrath of their deity.[27] The rajas pf Khurda, however, having lost the actual power to "monopolize" the Jagannath cult, during their struggle with the subhehdars at Cuttack tried to gain and to assure the support of their feudatory *rajas* (*shamanata rajas*) by "sharing"[28] their own position in the state cult with them. In the royal letters (*chamu cithau*), which were usually addressed to the administrators (*pariksa*) of the

Jagannath temple, the raja of Khurda announced the visit of a feudatory raja to Puri who had applied for special privileges during this visit.[29] These letters usually include a detailed list of the ritual privileges, which were to be granted to the feudatory rajas and their families during their worship of Jagannath.[30] They also often prescribed the donations, which the rajas should receive from the temple treasure as well as those, which the feudatory *rajas* had promised to present to Jagannath. It is extremely interesting to note that out of roughly 100 *chamu chitaus*, which were known to have been used by the Khurda Rajas, 80 percent belong to the late 17th century and to the first half of the 18th century, which was simultaneous with Khurda Raja's struggle for his political survival.

Most interesting in this respect are the royal letters of Ramachandra II and his son Virakesari. Out of the 14 royal letters, which we posses from Ramchandra altogether 11 are dated from the year 1733 and connected with the great car festival. During the preparation of *Navakalevara* ritual Ramachandra had returned with the Jagannath image from his exile in South Orissa in order to prevent his son and the Muslim governor from controlling this most important ritual of the Jagannath cult. All his royal letters were intended for his adjoining feudatories of Baramba, Tigeria, Khandapara, Ranpur whose support was most essential for him.[31] Another letter referred to the Raja of Khallikota, whose Zamindari had once been an important station on Jagannath's flight beyond the borders of Orissa. All these rajas were allowed by Ramachandra's royal orders to perform special rituals during their worship of Jagannath and they received the sacred *sarhi* (turban) as a tone of their acknowledgement.[32] Virakesari, Ramchandra's son's time sees 34 letters during the period between 1741 and1751, the highest ever. This was exactly the time when due to struggle between Raghuji Bhonsle and Alivardi Khan, a quasi anarchical situation prevailed in Odisha during which both the feudatory rajas and Virakesari of Khurda tried to consolidate their power.[33] Virakesari granted special privileges to 15 Garahjat rajas of Odisha and to princely visitors from Delhi and Assam. The 15 rajas with the exception of Sonpur and Kujang (in Mahanadi Delta and West Odisha, respectively) were all feudatories of Khurda since Akbar's time. This fact clearly reveals the direct relation between political dependence and the ritual privileges in the Jagannath cult and it illustrates to what extent the Rajas of Khurda, in their desperate power struggle, were willing to use the Jagannath cult for their political ends.

Most illustrative in this respect are Virakesari's royal letters to Raja Jagannath of Athagarah in South Odisha. In 1731 Raghunath had given shelter to the prince Virakesari after Taqi

Khan had imprisoned his father. From 1733 to 1736 the Raja Jagannath had given shelter to the Lord of Puri for which he constructed a small temple in a village near Athgarh, which he donated, together with three other villages, for the maintenance of cult of the Jagannath and his priests. In the year 1746 Virakeshari in appreciation of this help conferred the heritable title "Haricandana Jagaddeva" upon the Raja of Athgarah during his visit of Puri: "Being merciful, we bestow upon you the title of Haricanda Jagaddeva and sanction to use vehicles run by a pair of horses along with a turban in which an elephant emblem made of silver is enshrined. Thou shall remain forever loyal at our feet with care. We have given necessary order to Ballyarsimpha, the manager of the temple of Sri Jagannath, to make adequate arrangement for your *darshan* in the temple. You may perform the offering to the deities, as you might desire by presenting any property you may like."[34]

The Rajas of Khurda granted to their feudatories privileges in the Jagannath cult at Puri and royal status symbols and confirmed them in their position as *samanta rajas*. The case of Khurda shows to what extent the ritual bond between the feudatories and the state deity (*rastra-devata*), which was under the control of the central *raja*, substituted the personal feudal bond, which had characterized the Western type of feudalism.[35]

The chiefs (kings) of the feudatory states were the descendants of the various royal lineages, which ruled over different parts of Odisha for a long time. These lineages came from different sources and many among them emerged from or represented the tribal descent, which gradually integrated or were incorporated into the mainstream Odisha culture. The raja of Khurda was recognized as the Gajapati king of Odisha to whom thirty-one chiefs paid tribute.

In the absence of centralized bureaucracy, the regional state countered local forces by ritual means achieved mainly through three measures:

1. Royal patronage of important places of pilgrimage within their respective kingdoms;
2. A systematic and large-scale settlement of Brahmins and;
3. The construction of new 'imperial temples' within the core region of the kingdoms.[36]

It has been suggested that these processes were further strengthened by the Bhakti movement in medieval Odisha. All these together evolved into what has been called the 'politico-ritual' framework or politico-cultural framework.

One of the characteristic features of the cult at the centers of pilgrimage was an increasing process of a ritual "royalization" of these deities. It is apparent that the royal patronage of these places of pilgrimage through generous land donations and constructions of new and impressive temple buildings in these *tirthas* had a great significance for the legitimation of royal power. Through their landed property which in some cases was scattered over several parts of the kingdom and the pilgrims who returned to their homes in all parts of the kingdom, the *tirthas* became centers of the multi-centered royal network which united the different nuclear areas religiously and even economically.[37]

Three things lie at the heart the argument here. First is the space, 'a sacred space' and a centre of pilgrimage; second, the political, ritual position of the imperial king of Odisha; and third, the overarching Jagannath cult as the regional cult and Jagannath as regional deity. During the time of the Marathas in Orissa these elements created cultural context for the Marathas.

Orissa remained under the Maratha rule from 1751 to 1803. The Maratha penetration into the east (Bengal and Odisha) has been explained in terms of collection of *chauth* from the Mughal territories. By the time the Marathas enter political scene of Odisha, there is a 'temple-state nexus' in Odisha. This nexus provides a context for the study of an interface with an external power in a cultural domain.[38]

While doing fieldwork in Odisha for collecting information and searching archival sources as well as material on the field, three impressions about the Marathas in Odisha were striking. One impression accrued in the area around Balasore where the Marathas have been remembered as *bargis* and great deal of that past still informs an attitude towards the Marathas. Second, there prevailed an image of the Marathas as also of *bargi* who were successfully fought or resisted and this local resistance by the King of Dhenkanal, Mahendra Bahadur in 1780-81, is still a part of local memory institutionalized and expressed through annual celebration of independence day in Dhenkanal. The eye witness account of the resistance against the Maratha invasion in Dhenkanal has been vividly described by Brjanath Badjena in his historical poetry, *Samar Tarang*.[39] Third, the areas around Puri to Cuttack does not have the same memory. It, in fact, exists in the as that of 'liberator' thanks to the Maratha role vis-à-vis the Jagananth temple and the cult in Puri against the backdrop of the Afghan and Mughal onslaught. There is another indictor which is part of a recent trend in the historical research in the region is the flourishing literature during the period in Odisha and the patronage that it enjoyed from the Bhonsles of Nagpur.

By the time the Marathas arrived on the scene the politico-cultural[40] site of the region, which bound the *Garhjat* region with the Raja of Khurda mediated by the cult of Jagannath and the temple and the relation between the Raja and the cult offered a preexisting political framework governed by culture deeply influenced the cult of Jagannath and the entire cultural or ritual paraphernalia created by it. The Marathas inserted themselves into this being Hindus and managed things without opposition. By the 18th century this domain of culture was constituted by certain forces as has been discussed in the earlier in this chapter and informed the political-cultural framework of the region. These constituents are:

1. The Holy place of Puri and the pilgrimage (centre)
2. The Temple and Cult of Jagannath (and Bhakti)
3. The Ascendance of the Brahmins (Brahmin settlements and their ritual and cultural) relation with the temple, the Cult and the King
4. The Ritual position of the Raja of Khurda and his position vis-à-vis the feudatory kings or chiefs
5. Ritualization of monarchy and royalization of the deity (deities).

These forces are seen to have originated and evolved over a long period of time through the history of the region and some of them may be considered as offshoots oagricultural economy, inclusion of the tribes into caste and militia, Hinduization of the tribal deities, large scale settlement of Brahmins and ascendancy of the Brahmin and emergence of ritual sovereignty and the emergence of Jagannath cult as the state religion.[41] The complex linkages that came into existence created a ritual wherewithal and a symbolic order and contributed to the structure of the regional formation with a determinate centre with its authority conceivable in symbolic and ritual forms. The Mughals, particularly Akbar played a significant role in restoring the structure disturbed by the Afghan invasion. Briefly recapitulated the regional integration in Orissa followed an evolutionary and cultural line and this took place around the cult of Jagannath. Since the 14th century this trajectory marked the evolution of an overarching politico-religious framework that shaped the politico-ritual position of the raja of Khurda. The following observations have been made with regard to the process of integration that took place and the politico-cultural framework that evolved.

1. *Tirthas, which* played a significant role in the Bhakti movement and deeply entrenched in the Brahmancal ideology received royal patronage. Deriving from the Hindu mythology the sacred space of Puri had maintained its distinct identity as a holy place and place of pilgrimage. At Puri, Gangas enforced their control through lavish patronage, building the great temple and settling Brahmana *sasana* (brahmanical settlement) around it.

2. By the 5th century A. D., Brahmanas were patronized by the chiefs of principalities in remote areas. Later ruling dynasties like Somavamsi Kesaries and the Gangas placed them near their

political centers. By maintaining a symbiotic relationship with the state, their presence was significant in building up a political and administrative hierarchy, and the Legitimation of royal authority.

3. The temple became the centre of overarching structure of royal authority.

It was a centralized nucleus where the diverse process of Legitimation converged and through its height and grandeur represented the hierarchy of political and social relationships at the apex of which sat the raja. By constructing the temple Jagannath, the Gangas sought to depict the integration of diverse ideologies and project their own glory over the land, as protectors of deity.[42]

The *tirtha* (the concept of *Srikshetra*), the temple and the cult provided a space as well as framework for the process of integration of different groups and power structures- the temple priests, the feudatory chiefs and the *mathas*. The temple priests fall into 36 categories including the non-Brahmin groups such as *Daita*. They constitute a dominant group within the temple and outside within the society often locked in a symbiotic relation with the raja. The struggle for authority between the temple priests and the state or raja was primarily articulated through the efforts of each party to gain access to and acquire control over the deity over a variety of ways.[43] Anangabhima, the third Ganga ruler declared himself to be the *rautta* (deputy) of Jagannath and his kingdom as being *Jagannath Samrajya*, or the 'Empire of Jagannath'[44]. This put the deity in the position of overlord and the raja, subordinate or his feudatory related to him through ritualized bonds of trust and obligation and the performance of certain duties on his behalf. This provided the raja with unquestionable power and "omnipotent with regard to his subordinates and feudatories".

Mathas were monastic establishments representing different sampradayas, or sects that were situated in Puri or in the vicinity of the temple. The Mathas originally imparted education to lay people as well as to monastic novice many of whom became sebayats in the temple. The Mathas housed itinerant sadhus, pilgrims and even beggars providing free boarding and lodging. They were the centers of learning and debate, where ideas and knowledge from different parts of the country converged. They were fairly cosmopolitan as neither the mahants nor the inhabitants were necessarily local. The Mathas, in fact, played key role in many ways with regard to the temple, the rituals and the pilgrimage.

The Marathas appear to have played active role in three ways in this cultural domain.[45] They tried to be part of the politico- ritual framework and play key role in the distributive network and establish control over the temple administration.

This involved the (ritual) position of the Raja of Khurda. Secondly, they played visible role in extending patronage to religious institutions. Finally, they played key role in the sphere of encouragement of pilgrimage and control over the pilgrim taxes.

From the roles the Marathas played vis-à-vis the cultural domain it would appear that the Marathas simultaneously tried to reaffirm the networks of rights and obligations, which also involved the *Gajapatis* and wished to acquire the ritual status of the *Gajapati*. Instances of acquiring the ritual status of the Gajapati raja were seen often. As an early instance, during the subahadari of Seo Bhatta (1760-64), on his visit to Puri, the *raja* of Paralakhemundi was given *sirpa* (royal turban) by Seo Bhatta, the Maratha subahadar, in the absence of the *Gajapati*.[46] This was a symbolic act of honour traditionally performed by the *Gajapati*. This was clearly an act by the Maratha Subedar to exclude the raja from the network of his own status. The Marathas also played upon the traditional rivalry between the Parlakhemundi raja and the Gajapati, demanding large sum of money from the latter in return for help in repulsing an attack by the former. When Virakesari was unable to repay the sum, the Marathas confiscated the key *parganas* of Limbai, Rahang, Serain and Chabiskud, which included the temple sphere, the *Sriksetra*. In this way they struck at the ritual base of the

Gajapati's authority, reducing him to an insignificant local Zamindar.[47]

Religious Policy:

In the backdrop of the Muslim attack on Hindu temples in Odisha, particularly on the Jagannath temple, the Maratha rule in Odisha has been considered significant. During the Muslim period, Puri was under constant attack, clearly evidenced by the fact that the idol of Lord Jagannath was removed several times by the *sevakas*. During the rule of Hasim Khan, the Muslim governor of Orissa, the idol was removed from the Gopalji Mandir at Khurda in fear of being dishonoured at the hands of the Muslims. The idol of Sakhigopal was broken during the subedarship of Mukaram Khan. Frightened at this the *sevakas* removed the idol of Lord Jagannath to Ghorpada in Banpur. When Sahajahan rebelled against his father and entered into Orissa in Deccan in 1623, the panic-stricken *sevaks* removed the idol of Lord Jagannath to Manitir village.

In the area of religious activities the Marathas played the role of active interference. Their role vis-à-vis the Jagannath temple was a testimony to this. After the surrender of the Shrikshetra to the Marathas by the raja of Khurda for non-Payment of the promised amount (one lakh rupees) due in lieu of help against Narayan Deo, the Zamindar of Kimed, the management of the temple of Jagannath came under the Marathas, the Maratha Subhedar of Odisha. On acquiring *Shrikshtra* and thereby the management of the Jagannath temple, the Maratha administration appointed a person for the management of lands attached to the temple and for general superintendence of receipts and disbursement.[48]

During the Maratha period, the Maratha rulers spent annually 20, 000 *Kahanas* of cowries or about Rs.6000/ for the charitable purposes in the Jagannath temple. The Maratha government took keen interest in the management of the temple and performance of the daily *nities* or *sebapuja* of the deities. The Maratha rulers extended support to those who were coming on pilgrimage to Puri.

In those days the pilgrims used to come to Puri by the help of elephants, horses, palanquins, boats and most of them came by walking covering long distance from their native place. While walking they had to face many difficulties such as robbery, illness, and attack by wild animals. Generally, the pilgrims traveled in a group so that they protected themselves and the robbers could not attack them. In spite of these troubles the pilgrims were encouraged to visit Puri because of the care taken by the Maratha government. *Dustak* (passes) were issued to the pilgrims without any cumbersome procedures to enter the Puri town and have *darshan* of the deities. The state governments were intimated to issue similar passports to those who intended to come on pilgrimage to Puri.

The government gave special attention for the safety of the pilgrims coming to visit Puri and made necessary arrangements at Puri for the comfort of the visiting pilgrims. The organization of tourism was the principal function of the Maratha government in Orissa. Professor Prabhat Mukharjee has given many instances of persons to whom passports were issued to come on pilgrimage to Puri individually or in a group or with their family members.[49]

The letters show that during the Maratha rule, the road to Puri was not safe. Rich persons like Ramsankar and Bishannath took with them armed retainers, coolies, and horses and carried food materials. The Maratha officers were requested to give them facilities during their journey.

The Maratha government was also very liberal in issuing passports even to the Muslims to visit Lord Jagannath at Puri, particularly during car festival when the deities were brought out of the temple. This was the time when the public, irrespective of caste, creed, and nationality got a chance for *darshan* for the deities. The devotees of Lord Jagannath who were forbidden to enter the temple on the grounds of their birth in low caste communities availed themselves of the opportunities to have *darshan* of Jagannath while on the *Rath* (Chariot) outside the temple during car festival.

In the 18th century there were no convenient route to Puri. People coming from Banaras used to make boat journey in the river Ganges up to Calcutta from where they came walking to Puri. Generally people walked on the banks of the rivers up to a certain distance and cover the rest of the distance by walking. During the period of Raja Ram Pandit who was the governor of Orissa the pilgrims coming from distant places like Bombay, Gujarat etc., were given maximum assistance in Odisha for their comfortable stay at Puri and have *darshan* peacefully. When Sankar and Visvanath came on pilgrimage to Puri nearly 60 people accompanied them. The government made all necessary arrangement for their stay at Puri comfortably and also for their return journey after having *darshan* of the Lord Jagannath with least difficulties.

During the Maratha rule the temple of Lord Jagannath was managed under the superintendence of the Raja of Khurda and the sources of income were of the revenue collected *Sataisa Hazari Mahal*, a vast landed property donated by Raghuji Bhosale of Nagpur. Other sources were town duties, sales tax from businessmen, sale proceeds of *Mahaprasad* and Kotha Khanja or assignment of land revenue. Due to mismanagement the income from these sources were not sufficient to meet the expense of the temple. In such a situation the Maratha Government had to provide additional funds to meet the deficiency.

The management of the temple was vested with the *parichha* during the Maratha period. There were 3 *Parihchas* among them the first and the third were the Marathas and the second one was a man of the soil. He was called Jagannath Rajguru. The third one was called *Satais Hazari Mahal Parichha* because he was collecting revenue from the *Satais Hazari Mahal*. The revenue collected was of Rs.27000 Kahanas of cowries. The *Parichhas* became corrupt and as a result the Government had to pay additional amount to meet the deficiency that occurred in the temple treasury.

In addition to this the Government had to meet the expenditure for the construction of the chariots, which was of the order of 30-40 thousand rupees per annum. The Raja of Daspalla used to supply logs of wood free of cost and therefore he was exempted from paying tribute unlike the Rajas of Mayurbhanj, Nilgri, Khurda who were paying tribute to the Maratha Government.

In order to recompensate the loss that occurred due to the heavy expenditure required for the construction of the chariots, the Maratha Government continued the practice of collecting pilgrim tax levied since the time of the Mughals. The *Pratiharis* of the temple used to collect at the rate of six *annas* per rupee from the pilgrims and the Maratha Government imposed a tax on the *Pratiharis* in order to make up the loss to some extent.

During the Maratha rule some attempts were made to enrich the temple by instituting new gods or by presents.[50] One Brahmachari Gosain, a Maratha Guru was allowed to get prepared one statue of Goddess Lakshmi in gold and another statue of Narayan Deva in Silver.[51] He placed the former on the left side of Jagannath and on the throne and the latter kept in the southern chamber. The temple was whitewashed. Many resents were offered. The offerings which were made by Chimma Sau consisted of some elephants, cloth and Jewels for Lord Jagannath.[52]

The Maratha Government made generous land grants for various *Bhogs* (offerings) to Jagannath and for different festivals. The Rajas of Nagpur and the Khurds assigned the annual assessment of certain villages which amounted to the large sum of K 148, 7, G 9, K 8 (in Kauriees) to provide Jagananth with *Bhog*.[53]

The Maratha Government took care not to allow any religious sect to introduce something new, which might bring disorder and indiscipline in the worship in the temple. Once an attempt was made under the leadership of Lakshamanath Krishna Goswami, a disciple of Sankaracharyapanthi to place an idol on the jeweled throne of Jagannath. The *Vaishnavapanthis* objected to that. A dispute arose. As a result the saint and the chief of the orders of *Shrikhetra* (Puri) stopped worshiping Jagannath and brought the matter to the notice of Raja of Nagpur. The Raja passed orders to the effect that nothing new, which would break the old practice and create confusion in the worship of Jagannath could be introduced. Thus the dispute was settled and the worship of Jagannath could be continued smoothly.[54]

As regards the *Mathas*, they received encouragement from the Maratha government either by occasional grants of land or some privileges. The abbot of Sri Ram Das of Dakhinaparusa Math was the Guru of the Maratha Governor of Orissa. He made rich endowments of land to this *Math*. The *Math* of Uttaraparusa was granted rent-free estate known as *Kodhar* by Raghuji Bhonsale. The revenue of the estate was to be devoted to the expenses of Mohan Bhog of Jagannath. Brajadeva Goswami a preacher of Chaitanya cult had a Math at Puri. He was exempted from paying any tax for all the goods he brought from Garhjats for religious purpose.[55] The Government also took interest in assisting some heads of the *Maths* for recovering money belonging to Jagannath but remaining outside Orissa.[56]

The *Odradesarajavamsavali* records that most of the Maratha leaders of Nagpur, including Januji Bhonsale and Chimna Bapu had been to Puri and paid their respect to the deity.[57] Januji issued a *sanad* to the *Gaudiya Mahant* at Puri on the top of which was respectfully stamped the name of the Lord Jagannath, with whose favour the order was issued.[58] The *sanad* orders the restoration of certain revenues that were previously collected by the *Gaudiya Gosvamis* and is addressed to all administrative officers of the entire *subah* of Odisha. [59] The *Mahant,* Basudev Goswami, was the 'mantra guru' (spiritual preceptor) of Virakesarideva, the Gajapati.

The Marathas, in some ways, were reaffirming the networks of rights and obligations that also involved the Gajapatis. They also tried to acquire the ritual status of the Gajapati and tried to dismantle the ritual status of the raja of Khurda.

Marathas showed special interest to improve temple administration to increase the flow of pilgrims who would pay tributes in cash and kind to the temple authorities. . Further effective temple management would enhance the image of the Maratha rulers in Hindu community. Therefore some of the Maratha rulers had introduced special offerings (*Puja*) and dishes (*Bhoga*) to deities to get the blessings. To cite an example, some landed properties were allotted to Daya Ram

Das of Utterparsva Matha of Puri to offer the special dish "Mohan Bhoga" to deities to fulfill the prayer of Mother of Raghuji Bhonsla.[60]

Aftet the death of Raghuji Bhonsla in 1755 A. D. at Nagpur, Sheo Bhatta subdued the revolting native Zamindars of Odisha, and took over the reign of administration. In 1760 A. D. an unforeseen events enhanced the scope of interference of the Marathas in temple administration. Paralakhemundi Gajapati Jagannath Narayana Deba claiming himself as the true heir of the Ganga dynasty (as his ancestors built up the temple) attacked Puri to recapture temple administration. The defeat of Puri Gajapati Birakishore Deba I tempted him to take the help of Maratha forces. With their help Khurda Gajapati drove away Jagannath Narayan Deba. But poor economy of the state forced Puri Gajapati to mortgage four high revenue yielding *parganas* i.e., Sirai, Lembai, Rahang and Chabiskud stretching from lake Chilika to river Daya to Marathas as Gajapati could not pay Rs. 1 lakh to meet the war expenses of the Maratha army as per the previous agreement.[61] Hence the Maratha rulers availed the upper hand in temple administration.

During the Maratha period the role of the Khurda raja was insignificant. The last decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the dismemberment of Khurda and the gradual appropriation of its original privileges in the Jagannath cult of

Puri by the Marathas, a situation which in turn was used by the feudatory states of central Odisha to strengthen their own autonomy. [62] The policy of the Marathas and of the East India Company towards Khurda and the beginning of colonial historical writing in Orissa may have encouraged feudatory chiefs of central Odisha to validate their own autonomy and identity vis-à-vis Khurda and their own princely neighbors through the construction of their own dynastic histories.

Notes and References

[1] See Aidan South Hall, 'The Segmentary State in Africa and Asia', *Comparative Study in Society and History*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Jan., 1988), pp. 52- 82. Burton Stein, *The Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1980. Herman Kulke, *Kings and Cults: State Formation and Legitimation in India and South East Asia*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2001.

[2] Bernardd Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, 1983.

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[3] This break has been seen in many works as a complete shift to a new structure or paradigm and indeed an epistemic break.

[4] The rise of Jagannath cult in Orissa as state deity substantiates this view or argument.

[5] See Burton Stein, *The Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India,* Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1980.

[6] See Bernard Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India,' in Eric Hohbsbawm and Terence Ranger (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition*, 1992.

[7] Burton Stein's work in the south on Chola kingdom. See Burton Stein, 'Integration of the Agrarian System of South India,' in R. E. Frankenberg (ed.), *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, Medison, 1969

[8] See Ulrike Teuscher, 'Changing Eklingi: A Holy Place as Source of Royal Legitimation,' *Studies in History*, 2005; 21; 1.

[9] See Hermen Kulke, *State Formation and Legitimation in India and South East Asia*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2001.

[10] J. K. Sahu, *Historical Geography of Orissa*, Decent Books,1997, New Delhi, p. 260.

[11] Ibid., p.xi.

[12] Yaaminey Mubayi, *Altar of Power: Temple and the State in the Land of Jagannath*, Manohar, 2005, p. 35.

[13] Ibid.

[14] 'Andhavarman Plates of Ananatasaktivarman'; Brihatproshtha Grant of Umavarman';' Rithapur Plates of Bhavadattavarman', in S.C De, *A Guide to Orissan Records*, Vols. And 4, Bhubaneswar Orissa: Orissa Sahitya Academy, 1961, pp. 1-30.

[15] Yaaminey op. cit., p. 36.

[16] Ibid, 127.

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid, p. 130.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid, p. 129.

[23] Ibid.

[24] See Kulke, op. cit.

[25] Muraqat-I-Hassan quoted in Sarkar 1916, 340- Harman kulke, 'The Making of the Local Chronicle: The *Ranpur Rajavamsa Itihas*, in AngelikaMalinar et al (ed.) The Text and Context in the History, Literature and Regional History of Orissa, Manohar, Delhi, 2004, p. 45.

[26] Ibid. 46.

[27] Anncharlott, Eschmann, et al. (ed.), *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, Manohar, Delhi, 2005, p.339.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid. pp. 339- 340.

[33] Ibid. 340.

[34] JSV, p131 (Translation S. N. Rajguru)- Kulke op. cit., p. 341.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Kulke, op. cit pp. 9-10.

[37] Ibid. p. 11.

[38] In the late medieval societies religious activities shaped cultural perspective or context (worldview). Thus culture existed in the domain of

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religion and vice versa. I emphasize that this determined the political structure and process even when an external power confronted it. This formulation helps me understand some of the Maratha activities in Orissa which were both in the domain of culture and politics at the same time.

[39] See Brajanath Badjena, *Samar Rarang*, (edited by Dr. Debendra Mohanty), Bidya Prakshan, Cuttack, 2004.

[40] Historians often use the term 'politico-ritual' to mean a juxtaposition of politics with cultural. I use 'politico-cultural' in stead to ground culture as a lager totality mediated by religion in the late medieval Orissan society in which ritual is an aspect of the cultural domain.

[41] Emergence of regional history within the precincts of religion in the form of a temple chronicle (the *Madalapanji)* may also be seen as another process of rising monarchial authority and legitimacy around the Jagannath Cult.

[42] Yaaminey Mubayi, *Altar of Power*... .....op.cit., p. 81

[43] Ibid pp. 82-83

[44] Ibid p. 83

[45] I treat this as the/a cultural domain for the reason that this defined and shaped the culture of Orissa in a variety of ways and mediated all other activities. The politico-ritual framework that evolved around the cult of Jagannath and the temple constituted fundamentally a cultural site where many activities of fundamental nature took place.

[46] Andrew Stirling, *Orissa: Its geography, Statistics, History, Religion and Antiquities*, Prafulla, Kolkatta, 2004, p. 61

[47] Yaainey Mubai, op. cit., p. 54

[48] 'Bengal Political Consultations', 4 Dec cited in 1759- B. C. Roy, *New Lights on Maratha Orissa*, p. 194

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[49] Prabhat Mukherjee, *History of the Jagannath Temple in the 19th Century*, Firma KLM, Calcutta, 1977.

[50] B. C. Ray, *New Lights on Maratha Orissa*, op.cit., p. 195

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid. – CPC Vol. V, No. 1950.

[53] Ibid. pp. 195-6.

[54] Ibid. 196- Letter no 245 (A Document preserved in the Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar).

[55] *Journal of Kalinga Historical Research Society*, Vol. I, Sept. 1946, No. 2., pp. 138-42

[56] Ibid. – TPR Received 1794, No. 153.

[57] Yaminey Mubayi, op. cit. 54.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Nilakantha Mishra, 'Temple Administration- Past and Present,' *Orissa Review*, July, 2006, p. 31

[61] Ibid

[62] Ray (1960), op.cit., Kulke (1992), op.cit, Kulke, 'The Making of a Local Chronicle: The Ranpur Rajavamsa Itihasa' in Angelika Malinar et al. (ed.), op. cit. p.50.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

The Maratha polity of the eighteenth century is represented through three different aspects- the seventeenth-eighteenth century continuum, expansionism as a policy and reality and the Maratha role in the regional contexts and theatres. The first aspect is an inextricable part of its *longue duree* process in the Deccan which sociologically and materially commences immediately from the sixteenth century. Archeologists and historians have still tried to associate it with still longer duree historical processes in the Deccan and formation of regional and supra-regional geopolitical orbits in the Deccan as a part of Indian historical process since the time of the Satavahans through the Yadavas.[1] From the seventeenth century the Maratha state formation is located in the certain specific historical trajectory. The Maratha state, having emerged as an independent sovereign state under Shijvai, moved in a specific historical trajectory organized conceptually around '*Swarajya*', '*Chauth*', '*Hindu Padsahi*', '*Maharashtra Dharma*', 'Maratha war of Independence'. Though after the death of Shivaji the Maratha state faced challenges from the Mughals, thanks to the leadership and the spirit and the genius the Maratha state re-emerged powerfully in the eighteenth century with a different vitality and a sense power.

The eighteenth century marked the commencement of the vigorous and powerful Maratha polity through a few developments:

1. Its role in (Mughal) politics of Delhi and Balaji Vishawnath's successful acquisition of three *sanads* from the Mughal Emporor viz. *Swarajya*, *Chauth* and *Deshmukhi* and thereby legitimizing its position in the Deccan vis-à-vis the six Mughal Subhas in the Deccan. Though the grant was restricted to six Mughal Subhs in the Deccan, the Maratha extended its application beyond Maharashtra or Deccan as they moved into the north through Gujarat, Malwa and Bundelkhand when they made the conquest of these territories under Bajirao after the Maratha victory against the Nizam in the Battle of Palkhed and the subsequent treaty in 1728 (the treaty of Mungi Sheogaon).
2. Second significant development in the context of the Maratha power and polity in the century was the

organization of ‘Maratha Confederacy’. A brainchild of Rajaram, originating in his policy of *Saranajam* system, the confederacy was organized around a new set of Maratha *sardars* (chiefs) who combined ability for military campaign and political-administrative skills, politico-military gentry of young blood that was new, capable and spirited. Its ideology was based upon expansionism by legitimate instrumentality of *Chauth* and sharing the acquisition or conquest and developing spheres of influence and operations.

3. The emergence of *Peshwa* as the power-centre in the Maratha politics was major development in the Maratha polity as the Chhatrapati remained technically head of the Maratha polity and decisions were taken by the Peshwa who now was the *de facto* head of the Maratha polity with his seat of authority in Pune.
4. The first *Peshwa* under Shahu, Balaji Viswanath set the agenda for the eighteenth century Maratha polity. The polity or the ‘Maratha Confederacy’ seemed to articulate its objective unambiguously when second *Peshwa,* Baji Rao placed the objective of taking the Maratha power to the north beyond the river Narmada. His policy of invasion and expansion of

Maratha power (or 'empire') has often been represented through his statement when he was attacking Hindustan, the heart of Mughal Empire, "strike at the trunk, and the branches will fall off themselves". His conquest of Malwa, Gujarat and Bundelkhand and appearance at the gate of Delhi in 1737 was the expression of such a regimen and approach or resolute and Maratha power.

5. The decline of the Mughal power and disintegration of the Mughal power provided an opportunity to politically exploit the situation or circumstances as they arose in Delhi and intervening in political processes in the outlying Mughal provinces where the Marathas made their claims for *Chauth*. It appears from the facts related to the Maratha politico-military activities through the century more articulate in under the leadership of Balaji Vishwanath, Baji Rao I, Balaji Baji Rao or Nana Saheb.

The motor force of the Maratha power and polity was economic interest or gain by each *sardar,* the *Peshwa* and the Maratha state. Tirthanakar Roy has explained the process of Maratha military economy dominantly through 'extraction' by way of 'military outposts' while examining the pre-modern political economy of the regional formations and the origins of English power in India through a process of what he calls 'military fiscalism'[2].

The area of research has been found relevant in the context of a critique of the available literature concerning the Mughal historiography dominantly on Persian sources and the Maratha centric historiography of another genre based dominantly on the Marathi and *Modi* documents. The third emerging historiography is based dominantly on local, non-archival as well as archival sources which attempts examine historical forces at the local and micro-historical levels potentially reflecting a different narrative along with a different set of determinants and explanatory modes or strategy. Further, the Maratha polity in the eighteenth century Indian attained a level of Pan-Indian magnitude, but Maratha presence was more in the outlying local context. The Maratha interaction with the locals in the contexts which have historically evolved and determined assumes importance since such acts at the local levels brings out a range of possibilities within which Maratha acts were performed. A case study in Odisha, therefore, has been taken to examine the said process and postulates of the work.

In the second chapter, the complexity of the eighteenth century has been unraveled within the context of the work. The decline of the Mughals after the death of Aurangzeb 1707 and the disintegration of the Mughal Empire is a product of the several processes. Many reaches have been done explain this phenomenon which range from political and military explanations to economic and structural ones, from individual responsibility to structural faults to military innovation or stagnation etc. have been part of historiographical debate for some time. The rise of the regional states with their new strategic locations nurtured objectives and their use of ethno-historical resources have been a part of the new trend in the historiography used particularly by ecological, military and local history historians. The present work has tried to take note of theses historiographical engagements. The ecological divide or more accurately interface in India between the arid and the wet ecological zones with their respective social and political formations, animal resources, locomotive resources, food, fodder etc., are some of the very important resources spatially or ecologically available which in temporal context such as the eighteenth century in India translates or transforms to power. The rise of the arid zone and horse warrior culture are some of the ways which help us understand history happening or located in the interstices of these zones in India. The rise and expansion of the Maratha power has been seen in this work as possible explanation, partly of these forces or contexts.

As has been seen in the third chapter, the Maratha invasion in the east i.e., in Bengal and Odisha was at one level the extension of the Maratha policy of acquisition of territories and extraction of finances i.e., *Chauth* and Tribute. Bhonsles of Nagpur invaded Bengal for *Chauth* and Odisha was their access point strategically located and with geographical extension. Invasions against Alivardi Khan, the Nawab of Bengal led to conflict with the Peshwa initially, but was resolved in1742 with Shahu' s intervention in favour of Raghuji Bhonsle the raja of Nagpur, who never considered the Peshwa as his equal, thanks to his royal lineage. From 1741- 1742, Bengal invasions by the Marathas involved 'bargi' or cavalry raids, battles, destruction of logistics by burning villages, paddy, food, animal fodder and on in the entire stretch of land from Balasore to Midnapur and beyond in Bengal. These invasions and raids was the cause of local misery and poverty which is passed into deep collective memory reflected in the negative image of the Marathas in these regions. Whereas this was the characteristic feature of the warfare in the eighteenth century India with limited resources ambitious states such the Marathas were trying expand their base, thus a new doctrine in the warfare related to destruction of enemy's logistics as well as the extortion and loot as part of the military payment in the culture military mercenarism. Furthermore, the military labour market which consisted dominantly of different ethic races, more numerous among them being the Afghans, inflicted such tragedy many times uncontrolled by the command structure. There are literary testimonies to these atrocities both in Bengal and Odisha.

The Maratha rule in Odisha under the fourth chapter has looked into the way Marathas dealt with two broad historically evolved administrative divisions in Odisha, viz. the *Mughalbandi* and the *Garhjat.* It was a general pattern among the Marathas to bring the Mughal territories under their direct control and leave the others such as the *Garhjat* autonomous, extracting from them tribute or *Peshkash,* while making them accept Maratha suzerainty. Tributes were unequal due to many considerations. Marathas provided protection to the chiefs. All their disputes were resolved by the Maratha governor in Odisha or by the Nagpur court. Revenue administration in *Mughalbandi* region was based on the Mughal structure without bring any innovation or reform though according to the British reports, the Maratha practices led to emergence of a new *zamindari* class out of the exiting village *gumastas*. There was also large scale 'Oriaization' of the revenue bureaucracy in Odisha during the Maratha period.

In the sixth chapter I have tried to discuss the role of the Marathas in the cultural domain in Odisha which is fundamentally the Jagannath temple. Odisha's historically evolved paradigm has been discussed here and the context of Odisha history and cultural evolution has been discussed. As has been argued in the chapter, the Marathas inserted themselves into the domain culture, the domain in which they made ritual control and negotiation with the chiefs of Odisha, especially the raja Khurda. They revived and re-strengthened the temple activities. The Marathas made their substantive presence in the domain and regenerated the pilgrim activities in substantive ways.

The study of the Maratha power and polity in Odisha's regional or local context has provided a new dimension in the understanding of the Marathas. The Marathas are a post-Mughal formation engaged in a polity or a political process that is based on 'military economy'. Military is the mainstay of the economy. In their contest with the British to control the military economy of South Asia, the British emerge successful. The Marathas fail since they fail to co-evolve the military and the state. Thus Marathas do not transit into a pre-modern formation or potential modern state.

Among several assumptions, was the assumption that the polity that produced huge volumes of documents, archived could not have chaotic, an assumption that required examination on the field. The present work has addressed this issue to an extent.

The thesis has tried to explore several contexts within which the Maratha power came into existence and expanded at the pan-Indian level. The colonial or imperial discourse followed by local historiographical discourses that the eighteenth century was a century of 'decline' and collapse, the Marathas were instrumental in the process of the eighteenth century 'chaos', and sees as 'predators' has been re-examined and contested within the context of the century, or what has been termed as the post-Mughal formations. In order to contextualize the military and political acts performed or perpetrated, with its underlying political objectives and aspirations, new contexts that are exclusively of the century, such as the military, political and economic and geopolitical contexts have been examined which propose that the Maratha power and polity that emerged in the resource-scarce zone of Deccan with political aspirations as the political, military and cultural circumstances and semiotics presented in both the centuries, had to integrate their political aspirations with economic and military possibilities, as they expanded into resource-rich region, starting point being marked with the conquest and integration of Malwa. The thesis, thus, critically, examines the instrumental possibilities of the century such as armed forces and its innovation and warfare, military labour market, military doctrine, economic base comprising of a politico-military economic paradigm consolidation in certain regions and extraction in others, given the nature of geopolitics, the structure of the existing polity and the variable Maratha interface including roles in cultural domain. The Marathas certainly do not seem to be a pre-Modern state formation with a coevolving finance ('fiscalism') and state (polity) which in case of (pre-modern)Europe has been termed as 'military-fiscalism' and yet exhibit a tendency which may be presented as being disposed to 'proto-imperial' formation, within an existing structure, thanks to the nature of its gentry associated with its politico-military formation, the 'Maratha Confederacy'.

A major outcome of the present research is the study and examination of these in a locale or region i.e., Odisha. Based on local sources allied with others, the thesis has examined a range of situations from local historiography associated with the

Marathas to Maratha intervention in the cultural domain in Odisha.

The research has been able suggest that a top-down for the study of the historical events and process renders certain ground realities invisible or blured. The Agency in the approach is different from when such a study is conducted at the micro level. In the present study, thanks to its local orientation or thrust, methodologically, the historiographical assumption about the eighteenth century and the role of the Marathas has been argued out. The works is located in the contestation of the colonial writings about the Marathas as 'free-booters', 'predators', their administration being 'ruinous', 'morally depraved' which when contextualized show that colonial writings deliberately did it in order to justify their acquisition and rule. The regional colonial and imperialist discourses have created a historiographical tradition which needs to be rescued by way of history of this kind through a regional and local approach.

Second finding of the work is the entire period from 1741 to 1803 has been taken as a whole. On close examination of the history of the period, it has been found that the Maratha presence in Odisha has to be divided into two periods, the first period from 1741 to 1751 and the second, 1751- 1803. The period from 1741 to 1751 is the time when the Marathas were invading Bengal against the Nawab Nazim of Bengal demanding *Chauth*. Annual invasions and raids were made which strategically involved Odisha. In the process of the invasions and raids in Bengal the Marathas were trying capture Cuttack which was under the Bengal Nazim. Many of the battles took place in Odisha in the Balasore region which bore the brunt of it. Villages were burnt. Trade and business got severely affected. Textile and cotton industry suffered considerably. Demographic displacements occurred by way desertion fearing Maratha raids which have entered the popular memory as 'bargi' raids. Loots and destruction of property were of common occurrence. Thus the spatio-temporal context of this past is that of the east of Cuttack to Balasore and Midnapur, Murshidabad and adjoining areas etc in Bengal from 1741-1751.

The period from 1751 to 1803 can be seen as the period of Maratha administration in Odisha. During the period the Marathas played a positive role though the purpose was drain of wealth from Odisha to Nagpur. The policy vis-à-vis the Garhjat was that of non-interference, except in extreme situation when the Marathas Subhedar at Cuttack interfered or the issue was referred to the court of Nagpur. The *Mughalbandi* was under the direct control of the Marathas.

Based upon the foci of Maratha policy, it is suggested that the Marathas had two areas, the core and the periphery. The periphery experienced raids and expropriation. But the Marathas had a settled system of rule in the core areas as has been discussed in the third chapter. The core, which were mostly the urban areas such as Cuttack, Balasore and Puri grew in trade, business, urban expansion and settlement of people from outside. There was an administrative, military and commercial class in these areas. The core areas, particularly, Balasore was poised for a capitalist growth but was stunted by the absence of communication and energy resources of the modern period and further, due to its Maratha colonial drain Cuttack to Nagpur.

What however, can be said in brief here during the Maratha period *Kauri* was cheap and prices of rise and other essential commodities was cheap. The condition of the people therefore was better than it was during the earlier Muslim and later the British periods. Thus the Maratha period does not see any agrarian rural discontent or resistance which become a recurrent phenomenon during the British rule soon after their acquisition.

The Marathas played a significant role in the cultural sphere in Odisha as has been discussed in the fifth chapter. They have been as liberator in this domain thanks to kind of turmoil the domain faced due to Muslim inroads. The Marathas not only restored the sanctity of the Jagannath Temple in Puri, but made elaborate arrangements for day today activities. An administrative set up was made and pilgrimage to Puri round the year from Bengal, from the north and east were made with security provided. The Marathas made annual income of 4/5 lakh from the pilgrimage, while making all arrangements, donations for the temple and *Mathas*. Puri known for its *tirtha* once again emerged as a cosmopolitan religious centre. Because of their role the Marathas played ritual sovereign role conferring ritual status on the Garhjat chiefs during the annual *Ratha* Yatra festival in Puri, almost usurping the role and status of the raja of Khurda in this domain. This role of the Marathas was never resisted by the chiefs or the *sebayats* in the Jagannath temple which only indicates the acceptance by the Odishan chiefs and people of the role of the Marathas in the cultural domain of Odisha.

Some indicators of richness and general contentment have been traced in the sphere of literature. Many literary works, such as Brajanath Badjena' s *Samartarang*, *Bidagdha*

Chintamani Abhimanyu Samant Singhar's *Sangita Chntamani* and *Bhagabatlila Chintamani* by Kamala Lochan Khadgaraya were some of the representative examples. Lyrical literature such as *Chutisa* , *Poi*, *Palas*, *Lilas* (Ram Lila, Ras Lila) were produced on large scale. Literary works and writes were patronized by the Nagpur court as well as the local chieftains. This was an indication of the material conditions in the society and the courts.

The research clearly insists on more empirical works in the regional contexts and regional sources. The present work has delved into Maratha activities in Odisha from 1741- 1803, and has been able to conclude that the Maratha actions had a certain pattern, they acted in several local contexts and in Odisha, they were hegemonic with an approach that awaits historiographical integration or insertion.

It also suggests that the Maratha polity was a post-Mughal and late medieval formation and continued to remain within that structural and ideological ambit. It was therefore a transition from the Mughal polity. It could not transit to a premodern formation and as such it failed to control the South Asia's military economy when pitted against the British because of this disposition.

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MARATHA POWER AND POLITY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY : A CASE STUDY IN ORISSA (1741- 1803)

A THESIS

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Chapter VI

Conclusion

The Maratha polity of the eighteenth century is represented through three different aspects- the seventeenth-eighteenth century continuum, expansionism as a policy and reality and the Maratha role in the regional contexts and theatres. The first aspect is an inextricable part of its *longue duree* process in the Deccan which sociologically and materially commences immediately from the sixteenth century. Archeologists and historians have still tried to associate it with still longer duree historical processes in the Deccan and formation of regional and supra-regional geopolitical orbits in the Deccan as a part of Indian historical process since the time of the Satavahans through the Yadavas.[1] From the seventeenth century the Maratha state formation is located in the certain specific historical trajectory. The Maratha state, having emerged as an independent sovereign state under Shijvai, moved in a specific historical trajectory organized conceptually around '*Swarajya*', '*Chauth*', '*Hindu Padsahi*', '*Maharashtra Dharma*', 'Maratha war of Independence'. Though after the death of Shivaji the Maratha state faced challenges from the Mughals, thanks to the leadership and the spirit and the genius the Maratha state re-emerged powerfully in the eighteenth century with a different vitality and a sense power.

The eighteenth century marked the commencement of the vigorous and powerful Maratha polity through a few developments:

1. Its role in (Mughal) politics of Delhi and Balaji Vishawnath's successful acquisition of three *sanads* from the Mughal Emporor viz. *Swarajya*, *Chauth* and *Deshmukhi* and thereby legitimizing its position in the Deccan vis-à-vis the six Mughal Subhas in the Deccan. Though the grant was restricted to six Mughal Subhs in the Deccan, the Maratha extended its application beyond Maharashtra or Deccan as they moved into the north through Gujarat, Malwa and Bundelkhand when they made the conquest of these territories under Bajirao after the Maratha victory against the Nizam in the Battle of Palkhed and the subsequent treaty in 1728 (the treaty of Mungi Sheogaon).
2. Second significant development in the context of the Maratha power and polity in the century was the

organization of 'Maratha Confederacy'. A brainchild of Rajaram, originating in his policy of *Saranajam* system, the confederacy was organized around a new set of Maratha *sardars* (chiefs) who combined ability for military campaign and political-administrative skills, politico-military gentry of young blood that was new, capable and spirited. Its ideology was based upon expansionism by legitimate instrumentality of *Chauth* and sharing the acquisition or conquest and developing spheres of influence and operations.

3. The emergence of *Peshwa* as the power-centre in the Maratha politics was major development in the Maratha polity as the Chhatrapati remained technically head of the Maratha polity and decisions were taken by the Peshwa who now was the *de facto* head of the Maratha polity with his seat of authority in Pune.
4. The first *Peshwa* under Shahu, Balaji Viswanath set the agenda for the eighteenth century Maratha polity. The polity or the 'Maratha Confederacy' seemed to articulate its objective unambiguously when second *Peshwa,* Baji Rao placed the objective of taking the Maratha power to the north beyond the river Narmada. His policy of invasion and expansion of

Maratha power (or 'empire') has often been represented through his statement when he was attacking Hindustan, the heart of Mughal Empire, "strike at the trunk, and the branches will fall off themselves". His conquest of Malwa, Gujarat and Bundelkhand and appearance at the gate of Delhi in 1737 was the expression of such a regimen and approach or resolute and Maratha power.

5. The decline of the Mughal power and disintegration of the Mughal power provided an opportunity to politically exploit the situation or circumstances as they arose in Delhi and intervening in political processes in the outlying Mughal provinces where the Marathas made their claims for *Chauth*. It appears from the facts related to the Maratha politico-military activities through the century more articulate in under the leadership of Balaji Vishwanath, Baji Rao I, Balaji Baji Rao or Nana Saheb.

The motor force of the Maratha power and polity was economic interest or gain by each *sardar,* the *Peshwa* and the Maratha state. Tirthanakar Roy has explained the process of Maratha military economy dominantly through 'extraction' by way of 'military outposts' while examining the pre-modern political economy of the regional formations and the origins of English power in India through a process of what he calls 'military fiscalism'[2].

The area of research has been found relevant in the context of a critique of the available literature concerning the Mughal historiography dominantly on Persian sources and the Maratha centric historiography of another genre based dominantly on the Marathi and *Modi* documents. The third emerging historiography is based dominantly on local, non-archival as well as archival sources which attempts examine historical forces at the local and micro-historical levels potentially reflecting a different narrative along with a different set of determinants and explanatory modes or strategy. Further, the Maratha polity in the eighteenth century Indian attained a level of Pan-Indian magnitude, but Maratha presence was more in the outlying local context. The Maratha interaction with the locals in the contexts which have historically evolved and determined assumes importance since such acts at the local levels brings out a range of possibilities within which Maratha acts were performed. A case study in Odisha, therefore, has been taken to examine the said process and postulates of the work.

In the second chapter, the complexity of the eighteenth century has been unraveled within the context of the work. The decline of the Mughals after the death of Aurangzeb 1707 and the disintegration of the Mughal Empire is a product of the several processes. Many reaches have been done explain this phenomenon which range from political and military explanations to economic and structural ones, from individual responsibility to structural faults to military innovation or stagnation etc. have been part of historiographical debate for some time. The rise of the regional states with their new strategic locations nurtured objectives and their use of ethno-historical resources have been a part of the new trend in the historiography used particularly by ecological, military and local history historians. The present work has tried to take note of theses historiographical engagements. The ecological divide or more accurately interface in India between the arid and the wet ecological zones with their respective social and political formations, animal resources, locomotive resources, food, fodder etc., are some of the very important resources spatially or ecologically available which in temporal context such as the eighteenth century in India translates or transforms to power. The rise of the arid zone and horse warrior culture are some of the ways which help us understand history happening or located in the interstices of these zones in India. The rise and expansion of the Maratha power has been seen in this work as possible explanation, partly of these forces or contexts.

As has been seen in the third chapter, the Maratha invasion in the east i.e., in Bengal and Odisha was at one level the extension of the Maratha policy of acquisition of territories and extraction of finances i.e., *Chauth* and Tribute. Bhonsles of Nagpur invaded Bengal for *Chauth* and Odisha was their access point strategically located and with geographical extension. Invasions against Alivardi Khan, the Nawab of Bengal led to conflict with the Peshwa initially, but was resolved in1742 with Shahu’ s intervention in favour of Raghuji Bhonsle the raja of Nagpur, who never considered the Peshwa as his equal, thanks to his royal lineage. From 1741- 1742, Bengal invasions by the Marathas involved ‘bargi’ or cavalry raids, battles, destruction of logistics by burning villages, paddy, food, animal fodder and on in the entire stretch of land from Balasore to Midnapur and beyond in Bengal. These invasions and raids was the cause of local misery and poverty which is passed into deep collective memory reflected in the negative image of the Marathas in these regions. Whereas this was the characteristic feature of the warfare in the eighteenth century India with limited resources ambitious states such the Marathas were trying expand their base, thus a new doctrine in the warfare related to destruction of enemy's logistics as well as the extortion and loot as part of the military payment in the culture military mercenarism. Furthermore, the military labour market which consisted dominantly of different ethic races, more numerous among them being the Afghans, inflicted such tragedy many times uncontrolled by the command structure. There are literary testimonies to these atrocities both in Bengal and Odisha.

The Maratha rule in Odisha under the fourth chapter has looked into the way Marathas dealt with two broad historically evolved administrative divisions in Odisha, viz. the *Mughalbandi* and the *Garhjat.* It was a general pattern among the Marathas to bring the Mughal territories under their direct control and leave the others such as the *Garhjat* autonomous, extracting from them tribute or *Peshkash,* while making them accept Maratha suzerainty. Tributes were unequal due to many considerations. Marathas provided protection to the chiefs. All their disputes were resolved by the Maratha governor in Odisha or by the Nagpur court. Revenue administration in *Mughalbandi* region was based on the Mughal structure without bring any innovation or reform though according to the British reports, the Maratha practices led to emergence of a new *zamindari* class out of the exiting village *gumastas*. There was also large scale 'Oriaization' of the revenue bureaucracy in Odisha during the Maratha period.

In the sixth chapter I have tried to discuss the role of the Marathas in the cultural domain in Odisha which is fundamentally the Jagannath temple. Odisha's historically evolved paradigm has been discussed here and the context of Odisha history and cultural evolution has been discussed. As has been argued in the chapter, the Marathas inserted themselves into the domain culture, the domain in which they made ritual control and negotiation with the chiefs of Odisha, especially the raja Khurda. They revived and re-strengthened the temple activities. The Marathas made their substantive presence in the domain and regenerated the pilgrim activities in substantive ways.

The study of the Maratha power and polity in Odisha's regional or local context has provided a new dimension in the understanding of the Marathas. The Marathas are a post-Mughal formation engaged in a polity or a political process that is based on 'military economy'. Military is the mainstay of the economy. In their contest with the British to control the military economy of South Asia, the British emerge successful. The Marathas fail since they fail to co-evolve the military and the state. Thus Marathas do not transit into a pre-modern formation or potential modern state.

Among several assumptions, was the assumption that the polity that produced huge volumes of documents, archived could not have chaotic, an assumption that required examination on the field. The present work has addressed this issue to an extent.

The thesis has tried to explore several contexts within which the Maratha power came into existence and expanded at the pan-Indian level. The colonial or imperial discourse followed by local historiographical discourses that the eighteenth century was a century of 'decline' and collapse, the Marathas were instrumental in the process of the eighteenth century 'chaos', and sees as 'predators' has been re-examined and contested within the context of the century, or what has been termed as the post-Mughal formations. In order to contextualize the military and political acts performed or perpetrated, with its underlying political objectives and aspirations, new contexts that are exclusively of the century, such as the military, political and economic and geopolitical contexts have been examined which propose that the Maratha power and polity that emerged in the resource-scarce zone of Deccan with political aspirations as the political, military and cultural circumstances and semiotics presented in both the centuries, had to integrate their political aspirations with economic and military possibilities, as they expanded into resource-rich region, starting point being marked with the conquest and integration of Malwa. The thesis, thus, critically, examines the instrumental possibilities of the century such as armed forces and its innovation and warfare, military labour market, military doctrine, economic base comprising of a politico-military economic paradigm consolidation in certain regions and extraction in others, given the nature of geopolitics, the structure of the existing polity and the variable Maratha interface including roles in cultural domain. The Marathas certainly do not seem to be a pre-Modern state formation with a coevolving finance ('fiscalism') and state (polity) which in case of (pre-modern)Europe has been termed as 'military-fiscalism' and yet exhibit a tendency which may be presented as being disposed to 'proto-imperial' formation, within an existing structure, thanks to the nature of its gentry associated with its politico-military formation, the 'Maratha Confederacy'.

A major outcome of the present research is the study and examination of these in a locale or region i.e., Odisha. Based on local sources allied with others, the thesis has examined a range of situations from local historiography associated with the

Marathas to Maratha intervention in the cultural domain in Odisha.

The research has been able suggest that a top-down for the study of the historical events and process renders certain ground realities invisible or blured. The Agency in the approach is different from when such a study is conducted at the micro level. In the present study, thanks to its local orientation or thrust, methodologically, the historiographical assumption about the eighteenth century and the role of the Marathas has been argued out. The works is located in the contestation of the colonial writings about the Marathas as 'free-booters', 'predators', their administration being 'ruinous', 'morally depraved' which when contextualized show that colonial writings deliberately did it in order to justify their acquisition and rule. The regional colonial and imperialist discourses have created a historiographical tradition which needs to be rescued by way of history of this kind through a regional and local approach.

Second finding of the work is the entire period from 1741 to 1803 has been taken as a whole. On close examination of the history of the period, it has been found that the Maratha presence in Odisha has to be divided into two periods, the first period from 1741 to 1751 and the second, 1751- 1803. The period from 1741 to 1751 is the time when the Marathas were invading Bengal against the Nawab Nazim of Bengal demanding *Chauth*. Annual invasions and raids were made which strategically involved Odisha. In the process of the invasions and raids in Bengal the Marathas were trying capture Cuttack which was under the Bengal Nazim. Many of the battles took place in Odisha in the Balasore region which bore the brunt of it. Villages were burnt. Trade and business got severely affected. Textile and cotton industry suffered considerably. Demographic displacements occurred by way desertion fearing Maratha raids which have entered the popular memory as 'bargi' raids. Loots and destruction of property were of common occurrence. Thus the spatio-temporal context of this past is that of the east of Cuttack to Balasore and Midnapur, Murshidabad and adjoining areas etc in Bengal from 1741-1751.

The period from 1751 to 1803 can be seen as the period of Maratha administration in Odisha. During the period the Marathas played a positive role though the purpose was drain of wealth from Odisha to Nagpur. The policy vis-à-vis the Garhjat was that of non-interference, except in extreme situation when the Marathas Subhedar at Cuttack interfered or the issue was referred to the court of Nagpur. The *Mughalbandi* was under the direct control of the Marathas.

Based upon the foci of Maratha policy, it is suggested that the Marathas had two areas, the core and the periphery. The periphery experienced raids and expropriation. But the Marathas had a settled system of rule in the core areas as has been discussed in the third chapter. The core, which were mostly the urban areas such as Cuttack, Balasore and Puri grew in trade, business, urban expansion and settlement of people from outside. There was an administrative, military and commercial class in these areas. The core areas, particularly, Balasore was poised for a capitalist growth but was stunted by the absence of communication and energy resources of the modern period and further, due to its Maratha colonial drain Cuttack to Nagpur.

What however, can be said in brief here during the Maratha period *Kauri* was cheap and prices of rise and other essential commodities was cheap. The condition of the people therefore was better than it was during the earlier Muslim and later the British periods. Thus the Maratha period does not see any agrarian rural discontent or resistance which become a recurrent phenomenon during the British rule soon after their acquisition.

The Marathas played a significant role in the cultural sphere in Odisha as has been discussed in the fifth chapter. They have been as liberator in this domain thanks to kind of turmoil the domain faced due to Muslim inroads. The Marathas not only restored the sanctity of the Jagannath Temple in Puri, but made elaborate arrangements for day today activities. An administrative set up was made and pilgrimage to Puri round the year from Bengal, from the north and east were made with security provided. The Marathas made annual income of 4/5 lakh from the pilgrimage, while making all arrangements, donations for the temple and *Mathas.* Puri known for its *tirtha* once again emerged as a cosmopolitan religious centre. Because of their role the Marathas played ritual sovereign role conferring ritual status on the Garhjat chiefs during the annual *Ratha* Yatra festival in Puri, almost usurping the role and status of the raja of Khurda in this domain. This role of the Marathas was never resisted by the chiefs or the *sebayats* in the Jagannath temple which only indicates the acceptance by the Odishan chiefs and people of the role of the Marathas in the cultural domain of Odisha.

Some indicators of richness and general contentment have been traced in the sphere of literature. Many literary works, such as Brajanath Badjena’ s *Samartarang*, *Bidagdha*

Chintamani Abhimanyu Samant Singhar's *Sangita Chntamani* and *Bhagabatlila Chintamani* by Kamala Lochan Khadgaraya were some of the representative examples. Lyrical literature such as *Chutisa* , *Poi*, *Palas*, *Lilas* (Ram Lila, Ras Lila) were produced on large scale. Literary works and writes were patronized by the Nagpur court as well as the local chieftains. This was an indication of the material conditions in the society and the courts.

The research clearly insists on more empirical works in the regional contexts and regional sources. The present work has delved into Maratha activities in Odisha from 1741- 1803, and has been able to conclude that the Maratha actions had a certain pattern, they acted in several local contexts and in Odisha, they were hegemonic with an approach that awaits historiographical integration or insertion.

It also suggests that the Maratha polity was a post-Mughal and late medieval formation and continued to remain within that structural and ideological ambit. It was therefore a transition from the Mughal polity. It could not transit to a premodern formation and as such it failed to control the South Asia's military economy when pitted against the British because of this disposition.